Pickwick Papers.

Showing how Mr Pickwick undertook to drive and Mr Winkle to ride and how they both did it.

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WORKS

OF

CHARLES DICKENS.

HOUSEHOLD EDITION.

ILLUSTRATED FROM DRAWINGS BY F. O. C. DARLEY AND JOHN GILBERT.

THE PICKWICK PAPERS

VOL. I.

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THE POSTHUMOUS PAPERS

OF

THE PICKWICK CLUB.

PREFACE.

An author who has much to communicate under this head, and expects to have it attended to, may be compared to a man who takes his friend by the button at a Theatre Door, and seeks to entertain him with a personal gossip before he goes in to the play.

Nevertheless, as Prefaces, though seldom read, are continually written, no doubt for the behoof of that so richly and so disinterestedly endowed personage, Posterity (who will come into an immense fortune), I add my legacy to the general remembrance.

It was observed, in the Preface to the original Edition, that the Pickwick Papers were designed for the introduction of diverting characters and incidents; that no ingenuity of plot was attempted, or even at that time considered very feasible by the author in connection with the desultory mode of publication adopted; and that the machinery of the Club, proving cumbrous in the management, was gradually abandoned as the work progressed. Although, on one of these points, experience and study have since taught me something, and I could

perhaps wish now, that these chapters were strung together on a stronger thread of general interest, still, what they are, they were designed to be.

I have seen various accounts in print, of the origin of these Pickwick Papers; which have, at all events, possessed — for me — the charm of perfect novelty. As I may infer, from the occasional appearance of such histories, that my readers have an interest in the matter, I will relate how they came into existence.

I was a young man of three-and-twenty, when the present publishers, attracted by some pieces I was at that time writing in the Morning Chronicle newspaper, (of which one series had lately been collected and published in two volumes, illustrated by my esteemed friend, Mr. George Cruikshank), waited upon me to propose a something that should be published in shilling numbers — then only known to me, or, I believe, to anybody else, by a dim recollection of certain interminable novels in that form, which used to be carried about the country by peddlers, and over some of which I remember to have shed innumerable tears, before I had served my apprenticeship to Life.

When I opened my door in Furnival's Inn to the managing partner who represented the firm, I recognized in him the person from whose hands I had bought, two or three years previously, and whom I had never seen before or since, my first copy of the Magazine in which my first effusion — dropped stealthily one evening at twilight, with fear and trembling, into a dark

letter-box, in a dark office, up a dark court in Fleet Street — appeared in all the glory of print; on which memorable occasion — how well I recollect it! — I walked down to Westminster Hall, and turned into it for half-an-hour, because my eyes were so dimmed with joy and pride, that they could not bear the street, and were not fit to be seen there. I told my visitor of the coincidence, which we both hailed as a good omen; and so fell to business.

The idea propounded to me was, that the monthly something should be a vehicle for certain plates to be executed by Mr. Seymour; and there was a notion, either on the part of that admirable humorous artist, or of my visitor (I forget which), that a "Nimrod Club," the members of which were to go out shooting, fishing, and so forth, and getting themselves into difficulties through their want of dexterity, would be the best means of introducing these. I objected, on consideration, that although born and partly bred in the country, I was no great sportsman, except in regard of all kinds of locomotion; that the idea was not novel, and had been already much used; that it would be infinitely better for the plates to arise naturally out of the text; and that I should like to take my own way, with a freer range of English scenes and people, and was afraid I should ultimately do so in any case, whatever course I might prescribe to myself at starting. My views being deferred to, I thought of Mr. Pickwick, and wrote the first number; from the proof-sheets of

which, Mr. Seymour made his drawing of the Club, and that happy portrait of its founder, by which he is always recognized, and which may be said to have made him a reality. I connected Mr. Pickwick with a club, because of the original suggestion, and I put in Mr. Winkle expressly for the use of Mr. Seymour. We started with a number of twenty-four pages instead of thirty-two, and four illustrations in lieu of a couple. Mr. Seymour's sudden and lamented death before the second number was published, brought about a quick decision upon a point already in agitation; the number became one of thirty-two pages with two illustrations, and remained so to the end. My friends told me it was a low, cheap form of publication,* by which I should ruin all my rising hopes; and how right my friends turned out to be, everybody now knows.

"Boz," my signature in the Morning Chronicle, appended to the monthly cover of this book, and retained long afterwards, was the nickname of a pet child, a younger brother, whom I had dubbed Moses, in honor of the Vicar of Wakefield; which being facetiously pronounced through the nose, became Boses, and being shortened, became Boz. "Boz" was a very familiar household word to me, long before I was an author, and so I came to adopt it.

It has been observed of Mr. Pickwick, that there is a decided change in his character, as these pages pro-

* This book would have cost, at the then established price of novels, about four guineas and a half.

ceed, and that he becomes more good and more sensible. I do not think this change will appear forced or unnatural to my readers, if they will reflect that in real life the peculiarities and oddities of a man who has anything whimsical about him, generally impress us first, and that it is not until we are better acquainted with him that we usually begin to look below these superficial traits, and to know the better part of him.

Lest there should be any well-intentioned persons who do not perceive the difference (as some such could not, when OLD MORTALITY was newly published) between religion and the cant of religion, piety and the pretence of piety, an humble reverence for the great truths of scripture, and an audacious and offensive obtrusion of its letter and not its spirit in the commonest dissensions and meanest affairs of life, to the extraordinary confusion of ignorant minds, let them understand that it is always the latter, and never the former, which is satirized here. Further, that the latter is here satirized as being, according to all experience, inconsistent with the former, impossible of union with it, and one of the most evil and mischievous falsehoods existent in society —whether it establish its head-quarters, for the time being, in Exeter Hall, or Ebenezer Chapel, or both. It may appear unnecessary to offer a word of observation on so plain a head. But, it is never out of season to protest against that coarse familiarity with sacred things, which is busy on the lip, and idle in the heart; or against the confounding of Christianity with any class

of persons who, in the words of SWIFT, have just enough religion to make them hate, and not enough to make them love, one another.

I have found it curious and interesting, looking over the sheets of this reprint, to mark what important social improvements have taken place about us, almost imperceptibly, even since they were originally written. The license of Counsel, and the degree to which Juries are ingeniously bewildered, are yet susceptible of moderation; while an improvement in the mode of conducting Parliamentary Elections (especially for counties) is still within the bounds of possibility. But, legal reforms have pared the claws of Messrs. Dodson and Fogg; a spirit of self-respect, mutual forbearance, education, and coöperation, for such good ends, has diffused itself among their clerks; places far apart are brought together, to the present convenience and advantage of the Public, and to the certain destruction, in time, of a host of petty jealousies, blindnesses, and prejudices, by which the Public alone have always been the sufferers; the laws relating to imprisonment for debt are altered; and the Fleet Prison is pulled down!

With such a retrospect comprised within so short a period, who knows, but it may be discovered, within this Century, that there are even magistrates in town and country, who should be taught to shake hands every day with Common-sense and Justice; that even Poor Laws may have mercy on the weak, the aged, and unfortunate; that Schools, on the broad principles of

Christianity, are the best adornment for the length and breadth of this civilized land; that Prison-doors should be barred on the outside, no less heavily and carefully than they are barred within; that the universal diffusion of common means of decency and health is as much the right of the poorest of the poor, as it is indispensable to the safety of the rich, and of the State; that a few petty boards and bodies — less than drops in the great ocean of humanity, which roars around them — are not to let loose Fever and Consumption on God's creatures at their will, or always to keep their little fiddles going, for a Dance of Death!

CONTENTS OF VOLUME I.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE

The Pickwickians. 19

CHAPTER II.

The first Day's Journey, and the first Evening's Adventures; with their Consequences. 26

CHAPTER III.

A new Acquaintance. The Stroller's Tale. A disagreeable Interruption; and an unpleasant Rencontre. 64

CHAPTER IV.

A Field-day and Bivouac. More new Friends; and an Invitation to the Country. 81

CHAPTER V.

A short one — showing, among other Matters, how Mr. Pickwick undertook to drive, and Mr. Winkle to ride; and how they both did it. 98

CHAPTER VI.

An old-fashioned Card Party. The Clergyman's Verses. The Story of the Convict's Return. 112

CHAPTER VII.

How Mr. Winkle, instead of shooting at the Pigeon and killing the Crow, shot at the Crow and wounded the Pigeon; how

PAGE

the Dingley Dell Cricket Club played all Muggleton, and how all Muggleton dined at the Dingley Dell expense: with other interesting and instructive Matters. 133

CHAPTER VIII.

Strongly illustrative of the Position, that the Course of True Love is not a Railway. 154

CHAPTER IX.

A Discovery and a Chase. 173

CHAPTER X.

Clearing up all Doubts (if any existed) of the Disinterestedness of Mr. Jingle's Character. 186

CHAPTER XI.

Involving another Journey, and an Antiquarian Discovery. Recording Mr. Pickwick's Determination to be present at an Election; and containing a Manuscript of the old Clergyman's. 206

CHAPTER XII.

Descriptive of a very important Proceeding on the Part of Mr. Pickwick; no less an Epoch in his Life, than in this History. 232

CHAPTER XIII.

Some Account of Eatanswill; of the state of Parties therein; and of the Election of a Member to serve in Parliament for that ancient, loyal, and patriotic Borough. 241

CHAPTER XIV.

Comprising a brief Description of the Company at the Peacock assembled; and a Tale told by a Bagman. 267

POSTHUMOUS PAPERS

OF

THE PICKWICK CLUB.

CHAPTER I.

THE PICKWICKIANS.

The first ray of light which illumines the gloom, and converts into a dazzling brilliancy that obscurity in which the earlier history of the public career of the immortal Pickwick would appear to be involved, is derived from the perusal of the following entry in the Transactions of the Pickwick Club, which the editor of these papers feels the highest pleasure in laying before his readers, as a proof of the careful attention, indefatigable assiduity, and nice discrimination, with which his search among the multifarious documents confided to him has been conducted.

"May 12, 1827. Joseph Smiggers, Esq., P.V.P M.P.C.,* presiding. The following resolutions unanimously agreed to.

"That this Association has heard read, with feelings of unmingled satisfaction, and unqualified approval, the paper communicated by Samuel Pickwick, Esq., G.C M.P.C.,† entitled 'Speculations on the Source of the

* Perpetual Vice-President — Member Pickwick Club.

† General Chairman — Member Pickwick Club.

Hampstead Ponds, with some Observations on the Theory of Tittlebats;' and that this Association does hereby return its warmest thanks to the said Samuel Pickwick, Esq., G.C. M.P.C., for the same.

"That while this Association is deeply sensible of the advantages which must accrue to the cause of science, from the production to which they have just adverted, no less than from the unwearied researches of Samuel Pickwick, Esq., G.C. M.P.C., in Hornsey, Highgate, Brixton, and Camberwell; they cannot but entertain a lively sense of the inestimable benefits which must inevitably result from carrying the speculations of that learned man into a wider field, from extending his travels, and consequently enlarging his sphere of observation; to the advancement of knowledge, and the diffusion of learning.

"That with the view just mentioned, this Association has taken into its serious consideration a proposal, emanating from the aforesaid Samuel Pickwick, Esq., G.C. M.P.C., and three other Pickwickians hereinafter named, for forming a new branch of United Pickwickians under the title of The Corresponding Society of the Pickwick Club.

"That the said proposal has received the sanction and approval of this Association.

"That the Corresponding Society of the Pickwick Club is therefore hereby constituted; and that Samuel Pickwick, Esq., G.C. M.P.C., Tracy Tupman, Esq., M.P.C., Augustus Snodgrass, Esq., M.P.C., and Nathaniel Winkle, Esq., M.P.C., are hereby nominated and appointed members of the same: and that they be requested to forward, from time to time, authenticated accounts of their journeys and investigations; of their

observations of character and manners; and of the whole of their adventures, together with all tales and papers, to which local scenery or associations may give rise, to the Pickwick Club, stationed in London.

"That this Association cordially recognizes the principle of every member of the Corresponding Society defraying his own travelling expenses; and that it sees no objection whatever to the members of the said society pursuing their inquiries for any length of time they please, upon the same terms.

"That the members of the aforesaid Corresponding Society be, and are hereby, informed, that their proposal to pay the postage of their letters, and the carriage of their parcels, has been deliberated upon, by this Association. That this Association considers such proposal worthy of the great minds from which it emanated; and that it hereby signifies its perfect acquiescence therein."

A casual observer, adds the Secretary, to whose notes we are indebted for the following account, — a casual observer might possibly have remarked nothing extraordinary in the bald head, and circular spectacles, which were intently turned towards his (the Secretary's) face, during the reading of the above resolutions. To those who knew that the gigantic brain of Pickwick was working beneath that forehead, and that the beaming eyes of Pickwick were twinkling behind those glasses, the sight was indeed an interesting one. There sat the man who had traced to their source the mighty Ponds of Hampstead, and agitated the scientific world with his Theory of Tittlebats, as calm and unmoved as the deep waters of the one on a frosty day, or as a solitary specimen of the other, in the inmost recesses of an earthen jar. And how much more interesting did the spectacle

become, when, starting into full life and animation, as a simultaneous call for "Pickwick" burst from his followers, that illustrious man slowly mounted into the Windsor chair, on which he had been previously seated, and addressed the club himself had founded. What a study for an artist did that exciting scene present! The eloquent Pickwick, with one hand gracefully concealed behind his coat tails, and the other waving in air, to assist his glowing declamation: his elevated position revealing those tights and gaiters, which, had they clothed an ordinary man, might have passed without observation, but which, when Pickwick clothed them — if we may use the expression — inspired involuntary awe and respect; surrounded by the men who had volunteered to share the perils of his travels, and who were destined to participate in the glories of his discoveries. On his right hand, sat Mr. Tracy Tupman; the too susceptible Tupman, who to the wisdom and experience of maturer years superadded the enthusiasm and ardor of a boy, in the most interesting and pardonable of human weaknesses — love. Time and feeding had expanded that once romantic form; the black silk waistcoat had become more and more developed; inch by inch had the gold watch chain beneath it disappeared from within the range of Tupman's vision; and gradually had the capacious chin encroached upon the borders of the white cravat, but the soul of Tupman had known no change — admiration of the fair sex was still its ruling passion. On the left of his great leader sat the poetic Snodgrass, and near him again the sporting Winkle; the former poetically enveloped in a mysterious blue cloak with a canine-skin collar, and the latter communicating additional lustre to a new green shooting coat, plaid neckerchief, and closely fitted drabs.

Mr. Pickwick's oration upon this occasion, together with the debate thereon, is entered on the Transactions of the Club. Both bear a strong affinity to the discussions of other celebrated bodies; and, as it is always interesting to trace a resemblance between the proceedings of great men, we transfer the entry to these pages.

"Mr. Pickwick observed (says the Secretary) that fame was dear to the heart of every man. Poetic fame was dear to the heart of his friend Snodgrass, the fame of conquest was equally dear to his friend Tupman; and the desire of earning fame, in the sports of the field, the air, and the water, was uppermost in the breast of his friend Winkle. He (Mr. Pickwick) would not deny, that he was influenced by human passions, and human feelings, (cheers) — possibly by human weaknesses — (loud cries of 'No'); but this he would say, that if ever the fire of self-importance broke out in his bosom, the desire to benefit the human race in preference, effectually quenched it. The praise of mankind was his Swing; philanthropy was his insurance office. (Vehement cheering.) He had felt some pride — he acknowledged it freely; and let his enemies make the most of it — he had felt some pride when he presented his Tittlebatian Theory to the world; it might be celebrated or it might not. (A cry of 'It is,' and great cheering.) He would take the assertion of that honorable Pickwickian whose voice he had just heard — it was celebrated; but if the fame of that treatise were to extend to the farthest confines of the known world, the pride with which he should reflect on the authorship of that production, would be as nothing compared with the pride with which he looked around him, on this, the proudest moment of his existence. (Cheers.) He was a humble

individual. ('No, no.') Still he could not but feel that they had selected him for a service of great honor, and of some danger. Travelling was in a troubled state, and the minds of coachmen were unsettled. Let them look abroad, and contemplate the scenes which were enacting around them. Stage-coaches were upsetting in all directions, horses were bolting, boats were overturning, and boilers were bursting. (Cheers — a voice 'No.') No! (Cheers.) Let that honorable Pickwickian who cried 'No' so loudly, come forward and deny it, if he could. (Cheers.) Who was it that cried 'No'? (Enthusiastic cheering.) Was it some vain and disappointed man — he would not say haberdasher — (loud cheers) — who, jealous of the praise which had been — perhaps undeservedly — bestowed on his (Mr. Pickwick's) researches, and smarting under the censure which had been heaped upon his own feeble attempts at rivalry, now took this vile and calumnious mode of ———

"Mr. Blotton, (of Aldgate,) rose to order. Did the honorable Pickwickian allude to him? (Cries of 'Order,' 'Chair,' 'Yes,' 'No,' 'Go on,' 'Leave off,' &c.)

"Mr. Pickwick would not put up to be put down by clamor. He *had* alluded to the honorable gentleman. (Great excitement.)

"Mr. Blotton would only say then, that he repelled the hon. gent's false and scurrilous accusation, with profound contempt. (Great cheering.) The hon. gent. was a humbug. (Immense confusion, and loud cries of 'Chair' and 'Order.')

"Mr. A. Snodgrass rose to order. He threw himself upon the chair. (Hear.) He wished to know, whether this disgraceful contest between two members of that club, should be allowed to continue? (Hear, hear.)

"The CHAIRMAN was quite sure the hon. Pickwickian would withdraw the expression he had just made use of.

"Mr. BLOTTON, with all possible respect for the chair, was quite sure he would not.

"The CHAIRMAN felt it his imperative duty to demand of the honorable gentlemen, whether he had used the expression which had just escaped him, in a common sense.

"Mr. BLOTTON had no hesitation in saying, that he had not — he had used the word in its Pickwickian sense. (Hear, hear.) He was bound to acknowledge, that, personally, he entertained the highest regard and esteem for the honorable gentleman; he had merely considered him a humbug in a Pickwickian point of view. (Hear, hear.)

"Mr. PICKWICK felt much gratified by the fair, candid, and full explanation of his honorable friend. He begged it to be at once understood, that his own observations had been merely intended to bear a Pickwickian construction. (Cheers.)"

Here the entry terminates, as we have no doubt the debate did also, after arriving at such a highly satisfactory, and intelligible point. We have no official statement of the facts, which the reader will find recorded in the next chapter, but they have been carefully collated from letters and other MS. authorities, so unquestionably genuine, as to justify their narration in a connected form.

CHAPTER II.

THE FIRST DAY'S JOURNEY, AND THE FIRST EVENING'S ADVENTURES; WITH THEIR CONSEQUENCES.

THAT punctual servant of all work, the sun, had just risen, and begun to strike a light on the morning of the thirteenth of May, one thousand eight hundred and twenty-seven, when Mr. Samuel Pickwick burst like another sun from his slumbers; threw open his chamber-window, and looked out upon the world beneath. Goswell-street was at his feet, Goswell-street was on his right hand — as far as the eye could reach, Goswell-street extended on his left; and the opposite side of Goswell-street was over the way. "Such," thought Mr. Pickwick, "are the narrow views of those philosophers who, content with examining the things that lie before them, look not to the truths which are hidden beyond. As well might I be content to gaze on Goswell-street forever, without one effort to penetrate to the hidden countries which on every side surround it." And having given vent to this beautiful reflection, Mr. Pickwick proceeded to put himself into his clothes; and his clothes into his portmanteau. Great men are seldom over-scrupulous in the arrangement of their attire; the operation of shaving, dressing, and coffee-imbibing was soon performed: and, in another hour, Mr. Pickwick, with his portmanteau in

his hand, his telescope in his great-coat pocket, and his note-book in his waistcoat, ready for the reception of any discoveries worthy of being noted down, had arrived at the coach stand in St. Martin's-le-Grand.

"Cab!" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Here you are sir," shouted a strange specimen of the human race, in a sackcloth coat, and apron of the same, who with a brass label and number round his neck, looked as if he were catalogued in some collection of rarities. This was the waterman. "Here you are, sir. Now, then, fust cab!" And the first cab having been fetched from the public-house, where he had been smoking his first pipe, Mr. Pickwick and his portmanteau were thrown into the vehicle.

"Golden Cross," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Only a bob's vorth, Tommy," — cried the driver, sulkily, for the information of his friend the waterman, as the cab drove off.

"How old is that horse, my friend?" inquired Mr. Pickwick, rubbing his nose with the shilling he had reserved for the fare.

"Forty-two," replied the driver, eyeing him askant.

"What!" ejaculated Mr. Pickwick, laying his hand upon his note-book. The driver reiterated his former statement. Mr. Pickwick looked very hard at the man's face, but his features were immovable, so he noted down the fact forthwith.

"And how long do you keep him out at a time?" inquired Mr. Pickwick, searching for further information.

"Two or three veeks," replied the man.

"Weeks!" said Mr. Pickwick in astonishment — and out came the note-book again.

"He lives at Pentonwil when he's at home," observed the driver, coolly, "but we seldom takes him home, on account of his veakness."

"On account of his weakness," reiterated the perplexed Mr. Pickwick.

"He always falls down, when he's took out o' the cab," continued the driver, "but when he's in it we bears him up werry tight, and takes him in werry short, so as he can't werry well fall down, and we've got a pair o' precious large wheels on; so ven he *does* move, they run after him, and he must go on — he can't help it."

Mr. Pickwick entered every word of this statement in his note-book, with the view of communicating it to the club as a singular instance of the tenacity of life in horses, under trying circumstances. The entry was scarcely completed when they reached the Golden Cross. Down jumped the driver, and out got Mr. Pickwick. Mr. Tupman, Mr. Snodgrass, and Mr. Winkle, who had been anxiously waiting the arrival of their illustrious leader, crowded to welcome him.

"Here's your fare," said Mr. Pickwick, holding out the shilling to the driver.

What was the learned man's astonishment, when that unaccountable person flung the money on the pavement, and requested in figurative terms to be allowed the pleasure of fighting him (Mr. Pickwick) for the amount!

"You are mad," said Mr. Snodgrass.

"Or drunk," said Mr. Winkle.

"Or both," said Mr. Tupman.

"Come on," said the cab-driver, sparring away like clock-work. "Come on — all four on you."

"Here's a lark!" shouted half a dozen hackney

coachmen. "Go to vork, Sam," — and they crowded with great glee round the party.

"What's the row, Sam?" inquired one gentleman, in black calico sleeves.

"Row!" replied the cabman, "what did he want my number for?"

"I didn't want your number," said the astonished Mr. Pickwick.

"What did you take it for, then?" inquired the cabman.

"I didn't take it," said Mr. Pickwick, indignantly.

"Would anybody believe," continued the cab-driver, appealing to the crowd, — "would anybody believe as an informer 'ud go about in a man's cab, not only takin' down his number, but ev'ry word he says into the bargain" (a light flashed upon Mr. Pickwick — it was the note-book.)

"Did he though?" inquired another cabman.

"Yes, did he," replied the first, — "and then, arter aggerawatin' me to assault him, gets three witnesses here to prove it. But I'll give it him, if I've six months for it. Come on," and the cabman dashed his hat upon the ground, with a reckless disregard of his own private property, and knocked Mr. Pickwick's spectacles off, and followed up the attack with a blow on Mr. Pickwick's nose, and another on Mr. Pickwick's chest, and a third in Mr. Snodgrass's eye, and a fourth, by way of variety, in Mr. Tupman's waistcoat, and then danced into the road, and then back again to the pavement, and finally dashed the whole temporary supply of breath out of Mr. Winkle's body; and all in half a dozen seconds.

"Where's an officer?" said Mr. Snodgrass.

"Put 'em under the pump," suggested a hot-pie man.

"You shall smart for this," gasped Mr. Pickwick.

"Informers," shouted the crowd.

"Come on," cried the cabman, who had been sparring without cessation the whole time.

The mob had hitherto been passive spectators of the scene; but as the intelligence of the Pickwickians being informers was spread among them, they began to canvass with considerable vivacity the propriety of enforcing the heated pastry-vendor's proposition; and there is no saying what acts of personal aggression they might have committed, had not the affray been unexpectedly terminated by the interposition of a new-comer.

"What's the fun?" said a rather tall, thin, young man, in a green coat, emerging suddenly from the coach-yard.

"Informers!" shouted the crowd again.

"We are not," roared Mr. Pickwick, in a tone which, to any dispassionate listener, carried conviction with it.

"Ain't you, though — ain't you?" said the young man, appealing to Mr. Pickwick, and making his way through the crowd, by the infallible process of elbowing the countenances of its component members.

That learned man in a few hurried words explained the real state of the case.

"Come along, then," said he of the green coat, lugging Mr. Pickwick after him by main force, and talking the whole way. "Here, No. 924, take your fare, and take yourself off — respectable gentleman, — know him well — none of your nonsense — this way, sir — where's your friends? — all a mistake, I see — never mind — accidents will happen — best regulated families — never say die — down upon your luck — pull him up — put that in his pipe — like the flavor — damned ras-

cals." And with a lengthened string of similar broken sentences, delivered with extraordinary volubility, the stranger led the way to the travellers' waiting-room, whither he was closely followed by Mr. Pickwick and his disciples.

"Here, waiter," shouted the stranger, ringing the bell with tremendous violence, "glasses round, — brandy and water, hot and strong, and sweet, and plenty, — eye damaged, sir? Waiter, raw beefsteak for the gentleman's eye, — nothing like raw beefsteak for a bruise, sir; cold lamp-post very good, but lamp-post inconvenient — damned odd standing in the open street half an hour, with your eye against a lamp-post — eh, — very good — ha! ha!" And the stranger, without stopping to take breath, swallowed at a draught full half a pint of the reeking brandy and water, and flung himself into a chair with as much ease as if nothing uncommon had occurred.

While his three companions were busily engaged in proffering their thanks to their new acquaintance, Mr. Pickwick had leisure to examine his costume and appearance.

He was about the middle height, but the thinness of his body, and the length of his legs, gave him the appearance of being much taller. The green coat had been a smart dress-garment in the days of swallow-tails, but had evidently in those times adorned a much shorter man than the stranger, for the soiled and faded sleeves scarcely reached to his wrists. It was buttoned closely up to his chin, at the imminent hazard of splitting the back; and an old stock, without a vestige of shirt collar, ornamented his neck. His scanty black trousers displayed here and there those shiny patches which be-

speak long service, and were strapped very tightly over a pair of patched and mended shoes, as if to conceal the dirty white stockings, which were nevertheless distinctly visible. His long black hair escaped in negligent waves from beneath each side of his old pinched-up hat; and glimpses of his bare wrist might be observed, between the tops of his gloves, and the cuffs of his coat-sleeves. His face was thin and haggard; but an indescribable air of jaunty impudence and perfect self-possession pervaded the whole man.

Such was the individual, on whom Mr. Pickwick gazed through his spectacles (which he had fortunately recovered), and to whom he proceeded, when his friends had exhausted themselves, to return, in chosen terms, his warmest thanks for his recent assistance.

"Never mind," said the stranger, cutting the address very short, "said enough, — no more; smart chap that cabman — handled his fives well; but if I'd been your friend in the green jemmy — damn me — punch his head — 'cod I would, — pig's whisper, — pieman too, — no gammon."

This coherent speech was interrupted by the entrance of the Rochester coachman, to announce that "The Commodore" was on the point of starting.

"Commodore!" said the stranger, starting up, "my coach, — place booked, — one outside — leave you to pay for the brandy and water, — want change for a five, — bad silver — Brummagem buttons — won't do — no go — eh?" and he shook his head most knowingly.

Now it so happened that Mr. Pickwick and his three companions had resolved to make Rochester their first halting-place too; and having intimated to their new-

found acquaintance that they were journeying to the same city, they agreed to occupy the seat at the back of the coach, where they could all sit together.

"Up with you," said the stranger, assisting Mr. Pickwick on to the roof with so much precipitation, as to impair the gravity of that gentleman's deportment very materially.

"Any luggage, sir?" inquired the coachman.

"Who — I? Brown paper parcel here, that's all, other luggage gone by water, — packing-cases, nailed up — big as houses — heavy, heavy, damned heavy," replied the stranger, as he forced into his pocket as much as he could of the brown paper parcel, which presented most suspicious indications of containing one shirt and a handkerchief.

"Heads, heads, take care of your heads," cried the loquacious stranger, as they came out under the low archway, which in those days formed the entrance to the coach-yard. "Terrible place — dangerous work — other day — five children — mother — tall lady, eating sandwiches — forgot the arch — crash — knock — children look round — mother's head off — sandwich in her hand — no mouth to put it in — head of a family off — shocking, shocking. Looking at Whitehall, sir, — fine place — little window — somebody else's head off there, eh, sir? — he didn't keep a sharp look-out enough either — eh, sir, eh?"

"I was ruminating," said Mr. Pickwick, "on the strange mutability of human affairs."

"Ah! I see — in at the palace-door one day, out at the window the next. Philosopher, sir?"

"An observer of human nature," sir, said Mr. Pickwick.

"Ah, so am I. Most people are when they've little to do, and less to get. Poet, sir?"

"My friend Mr. Snodgrass has a strong poetic turn," said Mr. Pickwick.

"So have I," said the stranger. "Epic poem, — ten thousand lines — revolution of July — composed it on the spot — Mars by day, Apollo by night, — bang the field-piece, twang the lyre."

"You were present at that glorious scene, sir?" said Mr. Snodgrass.

"Present! think I was;* fired a musket, — fired with an idea, — rushed into wine-shop — wrote it down — back again — whiz, bang — another idea — wine-shop again — pen and ink — back again — cut and slash — noble time, sir. Sportsman, sir?" abruptly turning to Mr. Winkle.

"A little, sir," replied that gentleman.

"Fine pursuit, sir, — fine pursuit. — Dogs, sir?"

"Not just now," said Mr. Winkle.

"Ah! you should keep dogs — fine animals — sagacious creatures — dog of my own once — Pointer — surprising instinct — out shooting one day — entering inclosure — whistled — dog stopped — whistled again — Ponto — no go: stock still — called him — Ponto, Ponto — wouldn't move — dog transfixed — staring at a board — looked up, saw an inscription — 'Gamekeeper has orders to shoot all dogs found in this inclosure' — wouldn't pass it — wonderful dog — valuable dog that — very."

"Singular circumstance that," said Mr. Pickwick. "Will you allow me to make a note of it?"

* A remarkable instance of the prophetic force of Mr. Jingle's imagination; this dialogue occurred in the year 1827: and the Revolution in 1830.

"Certainly, sir, certainly — hundred more anecdotes of the same animal. — Fine girl, sir" (to Mr. Tracy Tupman, who had been bestowing sundry anti-Pickwickian glances on a young lady by the roadside).

"Very!" said Mr. Tupman.

"English girls not so fine as Spanish — noble creatures — jet hair — black eyes — lovely forms — sweet creatures — beautiful."

"You have been in Spain, sir?" said Mr. Tracy Tupman.

"Lived there — ages."

"Many conquests, sir?" inquired Mr. Tupman.

"Conquests! Thousands. Don Bolaro Fizzgig — Grandee — only daughter — Donna Christina — splendid creature — loved me to distraction — jealous father — high-souled daughter — handsome Englishman — Donna Christina in despair — prussic acid — stomach-pump in my portmanteau — operation performed — old Bolaro in ecstacies — consent to our union — join hands and floods of tears — romantic story — very."

"Is the lady in England now, sir?" inquired Mr. Tupman, on whom the description of her charms had produced a powerful impression.

"Dead, sir — dead," said the stranger, applying to his right eye the brief remnant of a very old cambric handkerchief. "Never recovered the stomach-pump — undermined constitution — fell a victim."

"And her father?" inquired the poetic Snodgrass.

"Remorse and misery," replied the stranger. "Sudden disappearance — talk of the whole city — search made everywhere — without success — public fountain in the great square suddenly ceased playing — weeks elapsed — still a stoppage — workmen employed to clean

it — water drawn off — father-in-law discovered sticking head first in the main pipe, with a full confession in his right boot — took him out, and the fountain played away again, as well as ever."

"Will you allow me to note that little romance down, sir?" said Mr. Snodgrass, deeply affected.

"Certainly, sir, certainly, — fifty more if you like to hear 'em — strange life mine — rather curious history — not extraordinary, but singular."

In this strain, with an occasional glass of ale, by way of parenthesis, when the coach changed horses, did the stranger proceed, until they reached Rochester bridge, by which time the note-books, both of Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Snodgrass, were completely filled with selections from his adventures.

"Magnificent ruin!" said Mr. Augustus Snodgrass, with all the poetic fervor that distinguished him, when they came in sight of the fine old castle.

"What a study for an antiquarian," were the very words which fell from Mr. Pickwick's mouth, as he applied his telescope to his eye.

"Ah! fine place," said the stranger, "glorious pile — frowning walls — tottering arches — dark nooks — crumbling staircases — Old cathedral too — earthy smell — pilgrims' feet worn away the old steps — little Saxon doors — confessionals like money-takers' boxes at theatres — queer customers those monks — Popes, and Lord Treasurers, and all sorts of old fellows, with great red faces, and broken noses, turning up every day — buff jerkins too — matchlocks — Sarcophagus — fine place — old legends too — strange stories: capital;" and the stranger continued to soliloquize until they reached the Bull Inn, in the High Street, where the coach stopped.

"Do you remain here, sir?" inquired Mr. Nathaniel Winkle.

"Here — not I — but you'd better — good house — nice beds — Wright's next house, dear — very dear — half-a-crown in the bill, if you look at the waiter — charge you more if you dine at a friend's than they would if you dined in the coffee-room — rum fellows — very."

Mr. Winkle turned to Mr. Pickwick, and murmured a few words; a whisper passed from Mr. Pickwick to Mr. Snodgrass, from Mr. Snodgrass to Mr. Tupman, and nods of assent were exchanged. Mr. Pickwick addressed the stranger.

"You rendered us a very important service, this morning, sir," said he; "will you allow us to offer a slight mark of our gratitude by begging the favor of your company at dinner?"

"Great pleasure — not presume to dictate, but broiled fowl and mushrooms — capital thing! What time?"

"Let me see," replied Mr. Pickwick, referring to his watch. "It is now nearly three. Shall we say five?"

"Suit me excellently," said the stranger, "five precisely — till then — care of yourselves;" and lifting the pinched-up hat a few inches from his head, and carelessly replacing it very much on one side, the stranger, with half the brown paper parcel sticking out of his pocket, walked briskly up the yard, and turned into the High Street.

"Evidently a traveller in many countries, and a close observer of men and things," said Mr. Pickwick.

"I should like to see his poem," said Mr. Snodgrass.

"I should like to have seen that dog," said Mr. Winkle.

Mr. Tupman said nothing; but he thought of Donna Christina, the stomach-pump, and the fountain; and his eyes filled with tears.

A private sitting-room having been engaged, bedrooms inspected, and dinner ordered, the party walked out to view the city, and adjoining neighborhood.

We do not find, from a careful perusal of Mr. Pickwick's notes on the four towns, Stroud, Rochester, Chatham, and Brompton, that his impressions of their appearance differ in any material point, from those of other travellers who have gone over the same ground. His general description is easily abridged.

"The principal productions of these towns," says Mr. Pickwick, "appear to be soldiers, sailors, Jews, chalk, shrimps, officers, and dockyard men. The commodities chiefly exposed for sale in the public streets, are marine stores, hard-bake, apples, flatfish, and oysters. The streets present a lively and animated appearance, occasioned chiefly by the conviviality of the military. It is truly delightful to a philanthropic mind, to see these gallant men staggering along under the influence of an overflow, both of animal, and ardent spirits; more especially when we remember that the following them about, and jesting with them, affords a cheap and innocent amusement for the boy population. Nothing (adds Mr. Pickwick) can exceed their good-humor. It was but the day before my arrival, that one of them had been most grossly insulted in the house of a publican. The barmaid had positively refused to draw him any more liquor; in return for which, he had (merely in playfulness) drawn his bayonet, and wounded the girl in the shoulder. And yet this fine fellow was the very first to go down to the house next morning, and express his

readiness to overlook the matter, and forget what had occurred!

"The consumption of tobacco in these towns (continues Mr. Pickwick) must be very great; and the smell which pervades the streets must be exceedingly delicious to those who are extremely fond of smoking. A superficial traveller might object to the dirt which is their leading characteristic; but to those who view it as an indication of traffic, and commercial prosperity, it is truly gratifying."

Punctual to five o'clock came the stranger, and shortly afterwards the dinner. He had divested himself of his brown paper parcel, but had made no alteration in his attire; and was, if possible, more loquacious than ever.

"What's that?" he inquired, as the waiter removed one of the covers.

"Soles, sir."

"Soles — ah! — capital fish — all come from London — stage-coach proprietors get up political dinners — carriage of soles — dozens of baskets — cunning fellows. Glass of wine, sir?"

"With pleasure," said Mr. Pickwick — and the stranger took wine; first with him, and then with Mr. Snodgrass, and then with Mr. Tupman, and then with Mr. Winkle, and then with the whole party together, almost as rapidly as he talked.

"Devil of a mess on the staircase, waiter," said the stranger. "Forms going up — carpenters coming down — lamps, glasses, harps. What's going forward?"

"Ball, sir," said the waiter.

"Assembly — eh?"

"No, sir, not Assembly, sir. Ball for the benefit of a charity, sir."

"Many fine women in this town, do you know, sir?" inquired Mr. Tupman, with great interest.

"Splendid — capital. Kent, sir — Everybody knows Kent — apples, cherries, hops, and women. Glass of wine, sir?"

"With great pleasure," replied Mr. Tupman. The stranger filled and emptied.

"I should very much like to go," said Mr. Tupman, resuming the subject of the ball, "very much."

"Tickets at the bar, sir," interposed the waiter, "half-a-guinea each, sir."

Mr. Tupman again expressed an earnest wish to be present at the festivity; but meeting with no response in the darkened eye of Mr. Snodgrass, or the abstracted gaze of Mr. Pickwick, he applied himself with great interest to the port wine and dessert which had just been placed on the table. The waiter withdrew, and the party were left to enjoy the cosy couple of hours succeeding dinner.

"Beg your pardon, sir," said the stranger, "Bottle stands — pass it round — way of the sun — through the button-hole — no heeltaps," and he emptied his glass, which he had filled about two minutes before; and poured out another, with the air of a man who was used to it.

The wine was passed, and a fresh supply ordered. The visitor talked, the Pickwickians listened. Mr. Tupman felt every moment more disposed for the ball. Mr. Pickwick's countenance glowed with an expression of universal philanthropy; and Mr. Winkle and Mr. Snodgrass fell fast asleep.

"They're beginning up-stairs," said the stranger — "hear the company — fiddles tuning — now the harp —

there they go." The various sounds which found their way down stairs, announced the commencement of the first quadrille.

"How I should like to go," said Mr. Tupman, again.

"So should I," said the stranger, — "confounded luggage — heavy smacks — nothing to go in — odd, a'n't it?"

Now general benevolence was one of the leading features of the Pickwickian theory, and no one was more remarkable for the zealous manner in which he observed so noble a principle, than Mr. Tracy Tupman. The number of instances, recorded on the Transactions of the Society, in which that excellent man referred objects of charity to the houses of other members for left-off garments, or pecuniary relief, is almost incredible.

"I should be very happy to lend you a change of apparel for the purpose," said Mr. Tracy Tupman, "but you are rather slim, and I am — "

"Rather fat — grown up Bacchus — cut the leaves — dismounted from the tub, and adopted kersey, eh? — not double distilled, but double milled — ha! ha! — pass the wine."

Whether Mr. Tupman was somewhat indignant at the peremptory tone in which he was desired to pass the wine which the stranger passed so quickly away; or whether he felt very properly scandalized, at an influential member of the Pickwick club being ignominiously compared to a dismounted Bacchus, is a fact not yet completely ascertained. He passed the wine, coughed twice, and looked at the stranger for several seconds with a stern intensity; as that individual, however, appeared perfectly collected, and quite calm under his searching glance, he gradually relaxed, and reverted to the subject of the ball.

"I was about to observe, sir," he said, "that though my apparel would be too large, a suit of my friend Mr. Winkle's would, perhaps, fit you better."

The stranger took Mr. Winkle's measure with his eye; and that feature glistened with satisfaction as he said—"Just the thing!"

Mr. Tupman looked round him. The wine which had exerted its somniferous influence over Mr. Snodgrass, and Mr. Winkle, had stolen upon the senses of Mr. Pickwick. That gentleman had gradually passed through the various stages which precede the lethargy produced by dinner, and its consequences. He had undergone the ordinary transitions from the height of conviviality, to the depth of misery, and from the depth of misery, to the height of conviviality. Like a gas lamp in the street, with the wind in the pipe, he had exhibited for a moment an unnatural brilliancy: then sunk so low as to be scarcely discernible: after a short interval, he had burst out again, to enlighten for a moment, then flickered with an uncertain, staggering sort of light, and then gone out altogether. His head was sunk upon his bosom; and perpetual snoring, with a partial choke, occasionally, were the only audible indications of the great man's presence.

The temptation to be present at the ball, and to form his first impressions of the beauty of the Kentish ladies, was strong upon Mr. Tupman. The temptation to take the stranger with him, was equally great. He was wholly unacquainted with the place, and its inhabitants; and the stranger seemed to possess as great a knowledge of both as if he had lived there from his infancy. Mr. Winkle was asleep, and Mr. Tupman had had sufficient experience in such matters to know, that the moment he awoke, he would, in the ordinary course of nature, roll

heavily to bed. He was undecided. "Fill your glass, and pass the wine," said the indefatigable visitor.

Mr. Tupman did as he was requested; and the additional stimulus of the last glass settled his determination.

"Winkle's bedroom is inside mine," said Mr. Tupman; "I couldn't make him understand what I wanted, if I woke him now, but I know he has a dress suit, in a carpet-bag; and supposing you wore it to the ball, and took it off when we returned, I could replace it without troubling him at all about the matter."

"Capital," said the stranger, "famous plan — damned odd situation — fourteen coats in the packing cases, and obliged to wear another man's — very good notion, that — very."

"We must purchase our tickets," said Mr. Tupman.

"Not worth while splitting a guinea," said the stranger, "toss who shall pay for both — I call; you spin — first time — woman — woman — bewitching woman," and down came the sovereign, with the Dragon (called by courtesy a woman) uppermost.

Mr. Tupman rang the bell, purchased the tickets, and ordered chamber candlesticks. In another quarter of an hour the stranger was completely arrayed in a full suit of Mr. Nathaniel Winkle's.

"It's a new coat," said Mr. Tupman, as the stranger surveyed himself with great complacency in a cheval glass. "The first that's been made with our club button," — and he called his companion's attention to the large gilt button which displayed a bust of Mr. Pickwick in the centre, and the letters "P. C." on either side.

"P. C." said the stranger, — "queer set out — old fellow's likeness, and 'P. C.' — What does 'P. C.' stand for — Peculiar Coat, eh?" Mr. Tupman, with rising

indignation, and great importance, explained the mystic device.

"Rather short in the waist, a'n't it?" said the stranger, screwing himself round, to catch a glimpse in the glass of the waist-buttons which were half-way up his back. "Like a general postman's coat — queer coats those — made by contract — no measuring — mysterious dispensations of Providence — all the short men get long coats — all the long men short ones." Running on in this way, Mr. Tupman's new companion adjusted his dress, or rather the dress of Mr. Winkle; and, accompanied by Mr. Tupman, ascended the staircase leading to the ballroom.

"What names, sir?" said the man at the door. Mr. Tracy Tupman was stepping forward to announce his own titles, when the stranger prevented him.

"No names at all," — and then he whispered Mr. Tupman, "Names won't do — not known — very good names in their way, but not great ones — capital names for a small party, but won't make an impression in public assemblies — *incog.* the thing — Gentlemen from London — distinguished foreigners — anything." The door was thrown open; and Mr. Tracy Tupman, and the stranger, entered the ballroom.

It was a long room, with crimson-covered benches, and wax-candles in glass chandeliers. The musicians were securely confined in an elevated den, and quadrilles were being systematically got through by two or three sets of dancers. Two card-tables were made up in the adjoining card-room, and two pair of old ladies, and a corresponding number of stout gentlemen, were executing whist therein.

The finale concluded, the dancers promenaded the

room, and Mr. Tupman and his companion stationed themselves in a corner, to observe the company.

"Charming women," said Mr. Tupman.

"Wait a minute," said the stranger, "fun presently — nobs not come yet — queer place — Dock-yard people of upper rank don't know Dock-yard people of lower rank —Dock-yard people of lower rank don't know small gentry — small gentry don't know tradespeople — Commissioner don't know anybody."

"Who's that little boy with the light hair and pink eyes, in a fancy dress?" inquired Mr. Tupman.

"Hush, pray — pink eyes — fancy dress — little boy — nonsense — Ensign 97th. — Honorable Wilmot Snipe — great family — Snipes — very."

"Sir Thomas Clubber, Lady Clubber, and the Miss Clubbers!" shouted the man at the door in a stentorian voice. A great sensation was created throughout the room, by the entrance of a tall gentleman in a blue coat and bright buttons, a large lady in blue satin, and two young ladies on a similar scale, in fashionably-made dresses of the same hue.

"Commissioner — head of the yard — great man — remarkably great man," whispered the stranger in Mr. Tupman's ear, as the charitable committee ushered Sir Thomas Clubber and family to the top of the room. The Honorable Wilmot Snipe, and other distinguished gentlemen crowded to render homage to the Miss Clubbers; and Sir Thomas Clubber stood bolt upright, and looked majestically over his black neckerchief at the assembled company.

"Mr. Smithie, Mrs. Smithie, and the Misses Smithie," was the next announcement.

"What's Mr. Smithie?" inquired Mr. Tracy Tupman.

"Something in the yard," replied the stranger. Mr. Smithie bowed deferentially to Sir Thomas Clubber; and Sir Thomas Clubber acknowledged the salute with conscious condescension. Lady Clubber took a telescopic view of Mrs. Smithie and family, through her eye-glass, and Mrs. Smithie, stared, in her turn, at Mrs. Somebody else, whose husband was not in the dock-yard at all.

"Colonel Bulder, Mrs. Colonel Bulder, and Miss Bulder," were the next arrivals.

"Head of the garrison," said the stranger, in reply to Mr. Tupman's inquiring look.

Miss Bulder was warmly welcomed by the Miss Clubbers; the greeting between Mrs. Colonel Bulder, and Lady Clubber, was of the most affectionate description; Colonel Bulder and Sir Thomas Clubber exchanged snuff-boxes, and looked very much like a pair of Alexander Selkirks; — "Monarchs of all they surveyed."

While the aristocracy of the place — the Bulders, and Clubbers, and Snipes — were thus preserving their dignity at the upper end of the room, the other classes of society were imitating their example in other parts of it. The less aristocratic officers of the 97th devoted themselves to the families of the less important functionaries from the dock-yard. The solicitors' wives, and the wine-merchant's wife, headed another grade, (the brewer's wife visited the Bulders;) and Mrs. Tomlinson, the post-office keeper, seemed by mutual consent to have been chosen the leader of the trade party.

One of the most popular personages, in his own circle, present, was a little fat man, with a ring of upright black hair round his head, and an extensive bald plain on the top of it — Doctor Slammer, surgeon to the Ninety-seventh. The doctor took snuff with everybody,

chatted with everybody, laughed, danced, made jokes, played whist, did everything, and was everywhere. To these pursuits, multifarious as they were, the little doctor added a more important one than any — he was indefatigable in paying the most unremitting and devoted attention to a little old widow, whose rich dress and profusion of ornament bespoke her a most desirable addition to a limited income.

Upon the doctor, and the widow, the eyes of both Mr. Tupman and his companion had been fixed for some time, when the stranger broke silence.

"Lots of money — old girl — pompous doctor — not a bad idea — good fun," were the intelligible sentences which issued from his lips. Mr. Tupman looked inquisitively in his face.

"I'll dance with the widow," said the stranger.

"Who is she?" inquired Mr. Tupman.

"Don't know — never saw her in all my life — cut out the doctor — here goes." And the stranger forthwith crossed the room; and, leaning against a mantelpiece, commenced gazing with an air of respectful and melancholy admiration on the fat countenance of the little old lady. Mr. Tupman looked on, in mute astonishment. The stranger progressed rapidly; the little doctor danced with another lady — the widow dropped her fan; the stranger picked it up, and presented it, — a smile — a bow — a curtesy — a few words of conversation. The stranger walked boldly up to, and returned with, the master of the ceremonies; a little introductory pantomime; and the stranger and Mrs. Budger took their places in a quadrille.

The surprise of Mr. Tupman at this summary proceeding, great as it was, was immeasurably exceeded by

the astonishment of the doctor. The stranger was young, and the widow was flattered. The doctor's attentions were unheeded by the widow; and the doctor's indignation was wholly lost on his imperturbable rival. Dr. Slammer was paralyzed. He, Dr. Slammer, of the Ninety-seventh, to be extinguished in a moment, by a man whom nobody had ever seen before, and whom nobody knew even now! Doctor Slammer — Doctor Slammer of the Ninety-seventh rejected! Impossible! It could not be! Yes, it was; there they were. What! introducing his friend! Could he believe his eyes! He looked again, and was under the painful necessity of admitting the veracity of his optics; Mrs. Budger was dancing with Mr. Tracy Tupman, there was no mistaking the fact. There was the widow before him, bouncing bodily, here and there, with unwonted vigor; and Mr. Tracy Tupman hopping about, with a face expressive of the most intense solemnity, dancing (as a good many people do) as if a quadrille were not a thing to be laughed at, but a severe trial to the feelings, which it requires inflexible resolution to encounter.

Silently and patiently did the doctor bear all this, and all the handings of negus, and watching for glasses, and darting for biscuits, and coquetting, that ensued; but, a few seconds after the stranger had disappeared to lead Mrs. Budger to her carriage, he darted swiftly from the room with every particle of his hitherto-bottled-up indignation effervescing from all parts of his countenance, in a perspiration of passion.

The stranger was returning, and Mr. Tupman was beside him. He spoke in a low tone, and laughed. The little doctor thirsted for his life. He was exulting. He had triumphed.

"Sir!" said the doctor, in an awful voice, producing a card, and retiring into an angle of the passage, "my name is Slammer, Doctor Slammer, sir — Ninety-seventh regiment — Chatham Barracks — my card, sir, my card." He would have added more, but his indignation choked him.

"Ah!" replied the stranger, coolly, "Slammer — much obliged — polite attention — not ill now, Slammer — but when I am — knock you up."

"You — you're a shuffler, sir," gasped the furious doctor, "a poltroon — a coward — a liar — a — a — will nothing induce you to give me your card, sir."

"Oh! I see," said the stranger, half aside, "negus too strong here — liberal landlord — very foolish — very — lemonade much better — hot rooms — elderly gentleman — suffer for it in the morning — cruel — cruel;" and he moved on a step or two.

"You are stopping in this house, sir," said the indignant little man; "you are intoxicated now, sir; you shall hear from me in the morning, sir. I shall find you out, sir; I shall find you out."

"Rather you found me out, than found me at home," replied the unmoved stranger.

Doctor Slammer looked unutterable ferocity, as he fixed his hat on his head with an indignant knock; and the stranger and Mr. Tupman ascended to the bedroom of the latter to restore the borrowed plumage to the unconscious Winkle.

That gentleman was fast asleep; the restoration was soon made. The stranger was extremely jocose; and Mr. Tracy Tupman, being quite bewildered with wine, negus, lights, and ladies, thought the whole affair an exquisite joke. His new friend departed; and, after ex-

periencing some slight difficulty in finding the orifice in his nightcap, originally intended for the reception of his head, and finally overturning his candlestick in his struggles to put it on, Mr. Tracy Tupman managed to get into bed, by a series of complicated evolutions, and shortly afterwards sank into repose.

Seven o'clock had hardly ceased striking on the following morning, when Mr. Pickwick's comprehensive mind was aroused from the state of unconsciousness, in which slumber had plunged it, by a loud knocking at his chamber door.

"Who's there?" said Mr. Pickwick, starting up in bed.

"Boots, sir."

"What do you want?"

"Please sir, can you tell me, which gentleman of your party wears a bright blue dress-coat, with a gilt button with P. C. on it?"

"It's been given out to brush," thought Mr. Pickwick; and the man has forgotten whom it belongs to — "Mr. Winkle," he called out, "next room but two, on the right hand.

"Thank'ee, sir," said the Boots, and away he went.

"What's the matter?" cried Mr. Tupman, as a loud knocking at *his* door roused *him* from his oblivious repose.

"Can I speak to Mr. Winkle, sir?" replied the Boots, from the outside.

"Winkle — Winkle," shouted Mr. Tupman, calling into the inner room.

"Hallo!" replied a faint voice from within the bedclothes.

"You're wanted — some one at the door —" and hav-

ing exerted himself to articulate thus much, Mr. Tracy Tupman turned round and fell fast asleep again.

"Wanted!" said Mr. Winkle, hastily jumping out of bed, and putting on a few articles of clothing; "wanted! at this distance from town — who on earth can want me!"

"Gentleman in the coffee-room, sir," replied the Boots, as Mr. Winkle opened the door, and confronted him; "gentleman says he'll not detain you a moment, sir, but he can take no denial."

"Very odd!" said Mr. Winkle; "I'll be down directly."

He hurriedly wrapped himself in a travelling-shawl, and dressing-gown, and proceeded down-stairs. An old woman and a couple of waiters were cleaning the coffee-room, and an officer in undress uniform was looking out of the window. He turned round as Mr. Winkle entered, and made a stiff inclination of the head. Having ordered the attendants to retire, and closed the door very carefully, he said, "Mr. Winkle, I presume."

"My name *is* Winkle, sir."

"You will not be surprised, sir, when I inform you, that I have called here this morning on behalf of my friend, Dr. Slammer, of the Ninety-seventh."

"Doctor Slammer!" said Mr. Winkle.

"Doctor Slammer. He begged me to express his opinion that your conduct of last evening was of a description which no gentleman could endure; and (he added) which no one gentleman would pursue towards another."

Mr. Winkle's astonishment was too real, and too evident, to escape the observation of Doctor Slammer's friend; he therefore proceeded. — "My friend, Doctor

Slammer, requested me to add, that he is firmly persuaded you were intoxicated during a portion of the evening, and possibly unconscious of the extent of the insult you were guilty of. He commissioned me to say, that should this be pleaded as an excuse for your behaviour, he will consent to accept a written apology, to be penned by you, from my dictation."

"A written apology!" repeated Mr. Winkle, in the most emphatic tone of amazement possible.

"Of course you know the alternative," replied the visitor, coolly.

"Were you intrusted with this message to me, by name?" inquired Mr. Winkle, whose intellects were hopelessly confused by this extraordinary conversation.

"I was not present myself," replied the visitor, "and, in consequence of your firm refusal to give your card to Doctor Slammer, I was desired by that gentleman to identify the wearer of a very uncommon coat — a bright blue dress-coat, with a gilt button, displaying a bust, and the letters 'P. C.'"

Mr. Winkle actually staggered with astonishment, as he heard his own costume thus minutely described. Doctor Slammer's friend proceeded: —

"From the inquiries I made at the bar, just now, I was convinced that the owner of the coat in question arrived here, with three gentlemen, yesterday afternoon. I immediately sent up to the gentleman who was described as appearing the head of the party; and he, at once, referred me to you."

If the principal tower of Rochester Castle had suddenly walked from its foundation, and stationed itself opposite the coffee-room window, Mr. Winkle's surprise would have been as nothing, compared with the profound

astonishment with which he had heard this address. His first impression was, that his coat had been stolen. "Will you allow me to detain you one moment?" said he.

"Certainly," replied the unwelcome visitor.

Mr. Winkle ran hastily up-stairs, and with a trembling hand opened the bag. There was the coat in its usual place, but exhibiting, on a close inspection, evident tokens of having been worn on the preceding night.

"It must be so," said Mr. Winkle, letting the coat fall from his hands. "I took too much wine after dinner, and have a very vague recollection of walking about the streets, and smoking a cigar, afterwards. The fact is, I was very drunk; — I must have changed my coat — gone somewhere — and insulted somebody — I have no doubt of it; and this message is the terrible consequence." Saying which, Mr. Winkle retraced his steps in the direction of the coffee-room, with the gloomy and dreadful resolve of accepting the challenge of the warlike Doctor Slammer, and abiding by the worst consequences that might ensue.

To this determination Mr. Winkle was urged by a variety of considerations; the first of which was, his reputation with the club. He had always been looked up to as a high authority on all matters of amusement and dexterity, whether offensive, defensive, or inoffensive; and if, on this very first occasion of being put to the test, he shrunk back from the trial, beneath his leader's eye, his name and standing were lost forever. Besides, he remembered to have heard it frequently surmised by the uninitiated in such matters, that by an understood arrangement between the seconds, the pistols were seldom loaded with ball; and, furthermore, he reflected that if

he applied to Mr. Snodgrass to act as his second, and depicted the danger in glowing terms, that gentleman might possibly communicate the intelligence to Mr. Pickwick, who would certainly lose no time in transmitting it to the local authorities, and thus prevent the killing or maiming of his follower.

Such were his thoughts when he returned to the coffee-room, and intimated his intention of accepting the doctor's challenge.

"Will you refer me to a friend, to arrange the time and place of meeting?" said the officer.

"Quite unnecessary," replied Mr. Winkle; "name them to me, and I can procure the attendance of a friend, afterwards."

"Shall we say — sunset this evening?" inquired the officer, in a careless tone.

"Very good," replied Mr. Winkle; thinking in his heart it was very bad.

"You know Fort Pitt?"

"Yes; I saw it yesterday."

"If you will take the trouble to turn into the field which borders the trench, take the footpath to the left, when you arrive at an angle of the fortification; and keep straight on till you see me; I will precede you to a secluded place, where the affair can be conducted without fear of interruption."

"*Fear* of interruption!" thought Mr. Winkle.

"Nothing more to arrange, I think," said the officer.

"I am not aware of anything more," replied Mr. Winkle.

"Good-morning."

"Good-morning:" and the officer whistled a lively air, as he strode away.

That morning's breakfast passed heavily off. Mr. Tupman was not in a condition to rise, after the unwonted dissipation of the previous night; Mr. Snodgrass appeared to labor under a poetical depression of spirits; and even Mr. Pickwick evinced an unusual attachment to silence and soda-water. Mr. Winkle eagerly watched his opportunity. It was not long wanting. Mr. Snodgrass proposed a visit to the castle, and as Mr. Winkle was the only other member of the party disposed to walk, they went out together.

"Snodgrass," said Mr. Winkle, when they had turned out of the public street; "Snodgrass, my dear fellow, can I rely upon your secrecy?" As he said this, he most devoutly and earnestly hoped he could not.

"You can," replied Mr. Snodgrass. "Hear me swear —"

"No, no;" interrupted Winkle, terrified at the idea of his companion's unconsciously pledging himself not to give information; "don't swear, don't swear; its quite unnecessary."

Mr. Snodgrass dropped the hand which he had, in the spirit of poesy, raised towards the clouds, as he made the above appeal, and assumed an attitude of attention.

"I want your assistance, my dear fellow, in an affair of honor," said Mr. Winkle.

"You shall have it," replied Mr. Snodgrass, clasping his friend's hand.

"With a doctor — Doctor Slammer, of the Ninety-seventh," said Mr. Winkle, wishing to make the matter appear as solemn as possible; "an affair with an officer, seconded by another officer, at sunset this evening, in a lonely field beyond Fort Pitt."

"I will attend you," said Mr. Snodgrass.

He was astonished, but by no means dismayed. It is extraordinary how cool any party but the principal can be in such cases. Mr. Winkle had forgotten this. He had judged of his friend's feelings by his own.

"The consequences may be dreadful," said Mr. Winkle.

"I hope not," said Mr. Snodgrass.

"The doctor, I believe, is a very good shot," said Mr. Winkle.

"Most of these military men are," observed Mr. Snodgrass, calmly, "but so are you, a'n't you?"

Mr. Winkle replied in the affirmative; and perceiving that he had not alarmed his companion sufficiently, changed his ground.

"Snodgrass," he said, in a voice tremulous with emotion, "if I fall, you will find in a packet which I shall place in your hands a note for my — for my father."

This attack was a failure also. Mr. Snodgrass was affected, but he undertook the delivery of the note, as readily as if he had been a Twopenny Postman.

"If I fall," said Mr. Winkle, "or if the doctor falls, you, my dear friend, will be tried as an accessory before the fact. Shall I involve my friend in transportation — possibly for life!"

Mr. Snodgrass winced a little at this, but his heroism was invincible. "In the cause of friendship," he fervently exclaimed, "I would brave all dangers."

How Mr. Winkle cursed his companion's devoted friendship internally, as they walked silently along, side by side, for some minutes, each immersed in his own meditations! The morning was wearing away; he grew desperate.

"Snodgrass," he said, stopping suddenly; "do *not* let

me be baulked in this matter — do *not* give information to the local authorities — do *not* obtain the assistance of several peace-officers, to take either me or Doctor Slammer, of the Ninety-seventh regiment, at present quartered in Chatham Barracks, into custody, and thus prevent this duel; — I say, do *not*."

Mr. Snodgrass seized his friend's hand warmly, as he enthusiastically replied, "Not for worlds!"

A thrill passed over Mr. Winkle's frame, as the conviction, that he had nothing to hope from his friend's fears, and that he was destined to become an animated target, rushed forcibly upon him.

The state of the case having been formally explained to Mr. Snodgrass, and a case of satisfaction pistols, with the satisfactory accompaniments of powder, ball, and caps, having been hired from a manufacturer in Rochester, the two friends returned to their inn; Mr. Winkle, to ruminate on the approaching struggle; and Mr. Snodgrass, to arrange the weapons of war, and put them into proper order for immediate use.

It was a dull and heavy evening, when they again sallied forth on their awkward errand. Mr. Winkle was muffled up in a huge cloak to escape observation; and Mr. Snodgrass bore under his the instruments of destruction.

"Have you got everything?" said Mr. Winkle, in an agitated tone.

"Ev'rything," replied Mr. Snodgrass; "plenty of ammunition, in case the shots don't take effect. There's a quarter of a pound of powder in the case, and I have got two newspapers in my pocket, for the loadings."

These were instances of friendship, for which any man might reasonably feel most grateful. The presumption

is, that the gratitude of Mr. Winkle was too powerful for utterance, as he said nothing, but continued to walk on — rather slowly.

"We are in excellent time," said Mr. Snodgrass, as they climbed the fence of the first field; "the sun is just going down." Mr. Winkle looked up at the declining orb, and painfully thought of the probability of his "going down" himself, before long.

"There's the officer," exclaimed Mr. Winkle, after a few minutes' walking.

"Where?" said Mr. Snodgrass.

"There; — the gentleman in the blue cloak." Mr. Snodgrass looked in the direction indicated by the forefinger of his friend, and observed a figure, muffled up, as he had described. The officer evinced his consciousness of their presence by slightly beckoning with his hand; and the two friends followed him, at a little distance, as he walked away.

The evening grew more dull every moment, and a melancholy wind sounded through the deserted fields, like a distant giant whistling for his house-dog. The sadness of the scene imparted a sombre tinge to the feelings of Mr. Winkle. He started, as they passed the angle of the trench — it looked like a colossal grave.

The officer turned suddenly from the path; and after climbing a paling, and scaling a hedge, entered a secluded field. Two gentlemen were waiting in it; one was a little fat man, with black hair; and the other — a portly personage in a braided surtout — was sitting with perfect equanimity on a camp-stool.

"The other party, and a surgeon, I suppose," said Mr. Snodgrass; "take a drop of brandy." Mr. Winkle

seized the wicker bottle, which his friend proffered, and took a lengthened pull at the exhilarating liquid.

"My friend, sir, Mr. Snodgrass," said Mr. Winkle, as the officer approached. Doctor Slammer's friend bowed, and produced a case similar to that which Mr. Snodgrass carried.

"We have nothing further to say, sir, I think," he coldly remarked, as he opened the case; "an apology has been resolutely declined."

"Nothing, sir," said Mr. Snodgrass, who began to feel rather uncomfortable himself.

"Will you step forward?" said the officer.

"Certainly," replied Mr. Snodgrass. The ground was measured, and preliminaries arranged.

"You will find these better than your own," said the opposite second, producing his pistols. "You saw me load them. Do you object to use them?"

"Certainly not," replied Mr. Snodgrass. The offer relieved him from considerable embarrassment; for his previous notions of loading a pistol were rather vague and undefined.

"We may place our men, then, I think," observed the officer, with as much indifference as if the principals were chess-men, and the seconds players.

"I think we may," replied Mr. Snodgrass; who would have assented to any proposition, because he knew nothing about the matter. The officer crossed to Dr. Slammer, and Mr. Snodgrass went up to Mr. Winkle.

"It's all ready," he said, offering the pistol. "Give me your cloak."

"You have got the packet, my dear fellow," said poor Winkle.

"All right," said Mr. Snodgrass. "Be steady, and wing him."

It occurred to Mr. Winkle that this advice was very like that which bystanders invariably give to the smallest boy in a street-fight; namely, "Go in, and win:" — an admirable thing to recommend, if you only know how to do it. He took off his cloak, however, in silence — it always took a long time to undo that cloak — and accepted the pistol. The seconds retired, the gentleman on the camp-stool did the same, and the belligerents approached each other.

Mr. Winkle was always remarkable for extreme humanity. It is conjectured that his unwillingness to hurt a fellow-creature intentionally, was the cause of his shutting his eyes when he arrived at the fatal spot; and that the circumstance of his eyes being closed, prevented his observing the very extraordinary and unaccountable demeanor of Doctor Slammer. That gentleman started, stared, retreated, rubbed his eyes, stared again; and, finally, shouted, "Stop, stop!"

"What's all this?" said Doctor Slammer, as his friend and Mr. Snodgrass came running up — "That's not the man."

"Not the man!" said Dr. Slammer's second.

"Not the man!" said Mr. Snodgrass.

"Not the man!" said the gentleman with the camp-stool in his hand.

"Certainly not," replied the little doctor. "That's not the person who insulted me last night."

"Very extraordinary!" exclaimed the officer.

"Very," said the gentleman with the camp-stool. "The only question is, whether the gentleman, being on the ground, must not be considered, as a matter of form, to be the individual who insulted our friend, Doctor Slammer, yesterday evening, whether he is really that

individual or not;" and having delivered this suggestion, with a very sage and mysterious air, the man with the camp-stool took a large pinch of snuff, and looked profoundly round, with the air of an authority in such matters.

Now Mr. Winkle had opened his eyes, and his ears too, when he heard his adversary call out for a cessation of hostilities; and perceiving by what he had afterwards said, that there was, beyond all question, some mistake in the matter, he at once foresaw the increase of reputation he should inevitably acquire, by concealing the real motive of his coming out; he therefore stepped boldly forward, and said, —

"I am not the person. I know it."

"Then, that," said the man with the camp-stool, "is an affront to Dr. Slammer, and a sufficient reason for proceeding immediately."

"Pray be quiet, Payne," said the doctor's second. "Why did you not communicate this fact to me this morning, sir?"

"To be sure — to be sure," said the man with the camp-stool, indignantly.

"I entreat you to be quiet, Payne," said the other. "May I repeat my question, sir?"

"Because, sir," replied Mr. Winkle, who had had time to deliberate upon his answer, — "because, sir, you described an intoxicated and ungentlemanly person as wearing a coat, which I have the honor, not only to wear, but to have invented — the proposed uniform, sir, of the Pickwick Club in London. The honor of that uniform I feel bound to maintain, and I therefore, without inquiry, accepted the challenge which you offered me."

"My dear sir," said the good-humored little doctor,

advancing with extended hand, "I honor your gallantry. Permit me to say, sir, that I highly admire your conduct, and extremely regret having caused you the inconvenience of this meeting, to no purpose."

"I beg you wont mention it, sir," said Mr. Winkle.

"I shall feel proud of your acquaintance, sir," said the little doctor.

"It will afford me the greatest pleasure to know you, sir," replied Mr. Winkle. Thereupon the doctor and Mr. Winkle shook hands, and then Mr. Winkle and Lieutenant Tappleton (the doctor's second), and then Mr. Winkle and the man with the camp-stool, and, finally, Mr. Winkle and Mr. Snodgrass: the last-named gentleman in an excess of admiration at the noble conduct of his heroic friend.

"I think we may adjourn," said Lieutenant Tappleton.

"Certainly," added the doctor.

"Unless," interposed the man with the camp-stool; "unless Mr. Winkle feels himself aggrieved by the challenge; in which case, I submit, he has a right to satisfaction."

Mr. Winkle, with great self-denial, expressed himself quite satisfied already.

"Or, possibly," said the man with the camp-stool, "the gentleman's second may feel himself affronted with some observations which fell from me at an early period of this meeting: if so, I shall be happy to give *him* satisfaction immediately."

Mr. Snodgrass hastily professed himself very much obliged with the handsome offer of the gentleman who had spoken last, which he was only induced to decline, by his entire contentment with the whole proceedings. The two seconds adjusted the cases, and the whole party

left the ground in a much more lively manner than they had proceeded to it.

"Do you remain long here?" inquired Doctor Slammer of Mr. Winkle, as they walked on most amicably together.

"I think we shall leave here the day after to-morrow" was the reply.

"I trust I shall have the pleasure of seeing you and your friend at my rooms, and of spending a pleasant evening with you, after this awkward mistake," said the little doctor; "are you disengaged this evening?"

"We have some friends here," replied Mr. Winkle, "and I should not like to leave them to-night. Perhaps you and your friend will join us at the Bull."

"With great pleasure," said the little doctor; "will ten o'clock be too late to look in for half an hour?"

"Oh dear, no," said Mr. Winkle. "I shall be most happy to introduce you to my friends, Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Tupman."

"It will give me great pleasure, I am sure," replied Doctor Slammer, little suspecting who Mr. Tupman was.

"You will be sure to come?" said Mr. Snodgrass.

"Oh certainly."

By this time they had reached the road. Cordial farewells were exchanged, and the party separated. Doctor Slammer and his friends repaired to the barracks, and Mr. Winkle, accompanied by his friend, Mr. Snodgrass, returned to their inn.

CHAPTER III.

A NEW ACQUAINTANCE. THE STROLLER'S TALE. A DISAGREEABLE INTERRUPTION, AND AN UNPLEASANT RENCONTRE.

Mr. Pickwick had felt some apprehensions in consequence of the unusual absence of his two friends, which their mysterious behavior during the whole morning had by no means tended to diminish. It was, therefore, with more than ordinary pleasure that he rose to greet them when they again entered; and with more than ordinary interest that he inquired what had occurred to detain them from his society. In reply to his questions on this point, Mr. Snodgrass was about to offer an historical account of the circumstances just now detailed, when he was suddenly checked, by observing that there were present not only Mr. Tupman and their stage-coach companion of the preceding day, but another stranger of equally singular appearance. It was a care-worn looking man, whose sallow face, and deeply sunken eyes were rendered still more striking than nature had made them, by the straight black hair which hung in matted disorder half way down his face. His eyes were almost unnaturally bright and piercing; his cheek-bones were high and prominent; and his jaws were so long and lank, that an observer would have supposed that he

was drawing the flesh of his face in, for a moment, by some contraction of the muscles, if his half opened mouth and immovable expression had not announced that it was his ordinary appearance. Round his neck he wore a green shawl, with the large ends straggling over his chest, and making their appearance occasionally, beneath the worn button-holes of his old waistcoat His upper garment was a long black surtout; and below it, he wore wide drab trousers, and large boots, running rapidly to seed.

It was on this uncouth-looking person, that Mr. Winkle's eye rested, and it was towards him that Mr. Pickwick extended his hand, when he said, "A friend of our friend's here. We discovered this morning that our friend was connected with the theatre in this place, though he is not desirous to have it generally known, and this gentleman is a member of the same profession. He was about to favor us with a little anecdote connected with it, when you entered."

"Lots of anecdote," said the green-coated stranger of the day before, advancing to Mr. Winkle and speaking in a low, confidential tone. "Rum fellow — does the heavy business — no actor — strange man — all sorts of miseries — Dismal Jemmy, we call him on the circuit." Mr. Winkle and Mr. Snodgrass politely welcomed the gentleman, elegantly designated as "Dismal Jemmy"; and calling for brandy and water, in imitation of the remainder of the company, seated themselves at the table.

"Now, sir," said Mr. Pickwick, "will you oblige us with proceeding with what you were going to relate?"

The dismal individual took a dirty roll of paper from his pocket, and turning to Mr. Snodgrass, who had just

taken out his note-book, said, in a hollow voice, perfectly in keeping with his outward man, "Are you the poet?"

"I — I do a little in that way," replied Mr. Snodgrass, rather taken aback by the abruptness of the question.

"Ah! poetry makes life what lights and music do the stage. Strip the one of its false embellishments, and the other of its illusions, and what is there real in either to live or care for?"

"Very true, sir," replied Mr. Snodgrass.

"To be before the footlights," continued the dismal man, "is like sitting at a grand court-show, and admiring the silken dresses of the gaudy throng, — to be behind them, is to be the people who make that finery, uncared for and unknown, and left to sink or swim, to starve or live, as fortune wills it."

"Certainly," said Mr. Snodgrass; for the sunken eye of the dismal man rested on him, and he felt it necessary to say something.

"Go on, Jemmy," said the Spanish traveller, "like black-eyed Susan — all in the Downs — no croaking — speak out — look lively."

"Will you make another glass before you begin, sir?" said Mr. Pickwick.

The dismal man took the hint, and having mixed a glass of brandy and water, and slowly swallowed half of it, opened the roll of paper and proceeded, partly to read and partly to relate, the following incident, which we find recorded on the Transactions of the club, as "The Stroller's Tale."

THE STROLLER'S TALE.

"THERE is nothing of the marvellous in what I am going to relate," said the dismal man; "there is nothing even uncommon in it. Want and sickness are too common in many stations of life, to deserve more notice than is usually bestowed on the most ordinary vicissitudes of human nature. I have thrown these few notes together, because the subject of them was well known to me for many years. I traced his progress downwards, step by step, until at last he reached that excess of destitution from which he never rose again.

"The man of whom I speak was a low pantomime actor, and, like many people of his class, an habitual drunkard. In his better days, before he had become enfeebled by dissipation and emaciated by disease, he had been in the receipt of a good salary, which, if he had been careful and prudent, he might have continued to receive for some years — not many; because these men either die early, or, by unnaturally taxing their bodily energies, lose, prematurely, those physical powers on which alone they can depend for subsistence. His besetting sin gained so fast upon him, however, that it was found impossible to employ him in the situations in which he really was useful to the theatre. The public-house had a fascination for him which he could not resist. Neglected disease and hopeless poverty were as certain to be his portion as death itself, if he persevered in the same course; yet he *did* persevere, and the result may be guessed. He could obtain no engagement, and he wanted bread.

"Everybody who is at all acquainted with theatrical

matters knows what a host of shabby, poverty-stricken men, hang about the stage of a large establishment, — not regularly engaged actors, but ballet people, procession men, tumblers, and so forth, who are taken on during the run of a pantomime, or an Easter piece, and are then discharged, until the production of some heavy spectacle occasions a new demand for their services. To this mode of life the man was compelled to resort; and taking the chair every night, at some low theatrical house, at once put him in possession of a few more shillings weekly, and enabled him to gratify his old propensity. Even this resource shortly failed him; his irregularities were too great to admit of his earning the wretched pittance he might thus have procured, and he was actually reduced to a state bordering on starvation, only procuring a trifle occasionally by borrowing it of some old companion, or by obtaining an appearance at one or other of the commonest of the minor theatres; and when he did earn anything, it was spent in the old way.

"About this time, and when he had been existing for upwards of a year no one knew how, I had a short engagement at one of the theatres on the Surrey side of the water, and here I saw this man, whom I had lost sight of for some time; for I had been travelling in the provinces, and he had been skulking in the lanes and alleys of London. I was dressed to leave the house, and was crossing the stage on my way out, when he tapped me on the shoulder. Never shall I forget the repulsive sight that met my eye when I turned round. He was dressed for the pantomime, in all the absurdity of a clown's costume. The spectral figures in the Dance of Death, the most frightful shapes that the ablest painter

ever portrayed on canvas, never presented an appearance half so ghastly. His bloated body and shrunken legs — their deformity enhanced a hundredfold by the fantastic dress — the glassy eyes, contrasting fearfully with the thick white paint with which the face was besmeared: the grotesquely ornamented head, trembling with paralysis, and the long skinny hands, rubbed with white chalk — all gave him a hideous and unnatural appearance, of which no description could convey an adequate idea, and which, to this day, I shudder to think of. His voice was hollow and tremulous, as he took me aside, and in broken words recounted a long catalogue of sickness and privations, terminating, as usual, with an urgent request for the loan of a trifling sum of money. I put a few shillings in his hand, and, as I turned away, I heard the roar of laughter which followed his first tumble on to the stage.

"A few nights afterwards, a boy put a dirty scrap of paper in my hand, on which were scrawled a few words in pencil, intimating that the man was dangerously ill, and begging me, after the performance, to see him at his lodgings in some street — I forget the name of it now — at no great distance from the theatre. I promised to comply as soon as I could get away; and, after the curtain fell, sallied forth on my melancholy errand.

"It was late, for I had been playing in the last piece; and, as it was a benefit night, the performances had been protracted to an unusual length. It was a dark cold night, with a chill damp wind, which blew the rain heavily against the windows and house-fronts. Pools of water had collected in the narrow and little frequented streets, and as many of the thinly-scattered oil-lamps had been blown out by the violence of the wind, the

walk was not only a comfortless, but most uncertain one. I had fortunately taken the right course, however, and succeeded, after a little difficulty, in finding the house to which I had been directed — a coal-shed, with one story above it, in the back room of which lay the object of my search.

"A wretched-looking woman, the man's wife, met me on the stairs, and, telling me that he had just fallen into a kind of doze, led me softly in, and placed a chair for me at the bedside. The sick man was lying with his face turned towards the wall; and as he took no heed of my presence, I had leisure to observe the place in which I found myself.

"He was lying on an old bedstead, which turned up during the day. The tattered remains of a checked curtain were drawn round the bed's head, to exclude the wind, which, however, made its way into the comfortless room through the numerous chinks in the door, and blew it to and fro every instant. There was a low cinder fire in a rusty unfixed grate; and an old three-cornered stained table, with some medicine-bottles, a broken glass, and a few other domestic articles, was drawn out before it. A little child was sleeping on a temporary bed which had been made for it on the floor, and the woman sat on a chair by its side. There were a couple of shelves, with a few plates and cups and saucers: and a pair of stage-shoes and a couple of foils hung beneath them. With the exception of little heaps of rags and bundles which had been carelessly thrown into the corners of the room, these were the only things in the apartment.

"I had had time to note these little particulars, and to mark the heavy breathing and feverish startings of the

sick man, before he was aware of my presence. In his restless attempts to procure some easy resting-place for his head, he tossed his hand out of the bed, and it fell on mine. He started up, and stared eagerly in my face.

"'Mr. Hutley, John,' said his wife; 'Mr. Hutley, that you sent for to-night, you know.'

"'Ah!' said the invalid, passing his hand across his forehead; 'Hutley — Hutley — let me see.' He seemed endeavoring to collect his thoughts for a few seconds, and then grasping me tightly by the wrist, said, 'Don't leave me — don't leave me, old fellow. She'll murder me; I know she will.'

"'Has he been long so?' said I, addressing his weeping wife.

"'Since yesterday night,' she replied. 'John, John, don't you know me?'

"'Don't let her come near me,' said the man, with a shudder, as she stooped over him. 'Drive her away; I can't bear her near me.' He stared wildly at her, with a look of deadly apprehension, and then whispered in my ear, 'I beat her, Jem; I beat her yesterday, and many times before. I have starved her, and the boy too; and now I am weak and helpless, Jem, she'll murder me for it; I know she will. If you'd seen her cry, as I have, you'd know it too. Keep her off.' He relaxed his grasp and sunk back exhausted on the pillow.

"I knew but too well what all this meant. If I could have entertained any doubt of it, for an instant, one glance at the woman's pale face and wasted form would have sufficiently explained the real state of the case. You had better stand aside,' said I to the poor creature. You can do him no good. Perhaps he will be calmer,

if he does not see you.' She retired out of the man's sight. He opened his eyes, after a few seconds, and looked anxiously round.

"'Is she gone?' he eagerly inquired.

"'Yes — yes,' said I; 'she shall not hurt you.'

"'I'll tell you what, Jem,' said the man, in a low voice, 'she does hurt me. There's something in her eyes wakes such a dreadful fear in my heart, that it drives me mad. All last night, her large staring eyes and pale face were close to mine; wherever I turned, they turned; and whenever I started up from my sleep, she was at the bedside looking at me.' He drew me closer to him, as he said in a deep, alarmed whisper — 'Jem, she must be an evil spirit — a devil! Hush! I know she is. If she had been a woman, she would have died long ago. No woman could have borne what she has.'

"I sickened at the thought of the long course of cruelty and neglect which must have occurred to produce such an impression on such a man. I could say nothing in reply; for who could offer hope, or consolation, to the abject being before me?

"I sat there for upwards of two hours, during which time he tossed about, murmuring exclamations of pain or impatience, restlessly throwing his arms here and there, and turning constantly from side to side. At length he fell into that state of partial unconsciousness, in which the mind wanders uneasily from scene to scene, and from place to place, without the control of reason, but still without being able to divest itself of an indescribable sense of present suffering. Finding from his incoherent wanderings that this was the case, and knowing that in all probability the fever would not grow immediately worse, I left him, promising his miserable wife that I

would repeat my visit next evening, and, if necessary sit up with the patient during the night.

'I kept my promise. The last four-and-twenty hours had produced a frightful alteration. The eyes, though deeply sunk and heavy, shone with a lustre, frightful to behold. The lips were parched, and cracked in many places; the dry hard skin glowed with a burning heat, and there was an almost unearthly air of wild anxiety in the man's face, indicating even more strongly the ravages of the disease. The fever was at its height.

"I took the seat I had occupied the night before, and there I sat for hours, listening to sounds which must strike deep to the heart of the most callous among human beings — the awful ravings of a dying man. From what I had heard of the medical attendant's opinion, I knew there was no hope for him: I was sitting by his death-bed. I saw the wasted limbs, which a few hours before had been distorted for the amusement of a boisterous gallery, writhing under the tortures of a burning fever — I heard the clown's shrill laugh, blending with the low murmurings of the dying man.

"It is a touching thing to hear the mind reverting to the ordinary occupations and pursuits of health, when the body lies before you weak and helpless; but when those occupations are of a character the most strongly opposed to anything we associate with grave or solemn ideas, the impression produced is infinitely more powerful. The theatre, and the public-house, were the chief themes of the wretched man's wanderings. It was evening, he fancied; he had a part to play that night; it was late, and he must leave home instantly. Why did they hold him, and prevent his going — he should lose the money — he must go. No! they would not let him.

He hid his face in his burning hands, and feebly bemoaned his own weakness, and the cruelty of his persecutors. A short pause, and he shouted out a few doggerel rhymes — the last he had ever learnt. He rose in bed, drew up his withered limbs, and rolled about in uncouth positions; he was acting — he was at the theatre. A minute's silence, and he murmured the burden of some roaring song. He had reached the old house at last; how hot the room was. He had been ill, very ill, but he was well now, and happy. Fill up his glass. Who was that, that dashed it from his lips? It was the same persecutor that had followed him before. He fell back upon his pillow, and moaned aloud. A short period of oblivion, and he was wandering through a tedious maze of low arched rooms — so low, sometimes, that he must creep upon his hands and knees to make his way along; it was close and dark, and every way he turned, some obstacle impeded his progress. There were insects too, hideous crawling things, with eyes that stared upon him, and filled the very air around: glistening horribly amidst the thick darkness of the place. The walls and ceiling were alive with reptiles — the vault expanded to an enormous size — frightful figures flitted to and fro — and the faces of men he knew, rendered hideous by gibing and mouthing, peered out from among them; they were searing him with heated irons, and binding his head with cords till the blood started; and he struggled madly for life.

"At the close of one of these paroxysms, when I had with great difficulty held him down in his bed, he sank into what appeared to be a slumber. Overpowered with watching and exertion, I had closed my eyes for a few minutes, when I felt a violent clutch on my shoulder. I awoke instantly. He had raised himself up, so as to

seat himself in bed — a dreadful change had come over his face, but consciousness had returned, for he evidently knew me. The child who had been long since disturbed by his ravings, rose from its little bed, and ran towards its father, screaming with fright — the mother hastily caught it in her arms, lest he should injure it in the violence of his insanity; but, terrified by the alteration of his features, stood transfixed by the bedside. He grasped my shoulder convulsively, and, striking his breast with the other hand, made a desperate attempt to articulate. It was unavailing — he extended his arm towards them, and made another violent effort. There was a rattling noise in the throat — a glare of the eye — a short stifled groan — and he fell back — dead!"

It would afford us the highest gratification to be enabled to record Mr. Pickwick's opinion of the foregoing anecdote. We have little doubt that we should have been enabled to present it to our readers, but for a most unfortunate occurrence.

Mr. Pickwick had replaced on the table the glass which, during the last few sentences of the tale, he had retained in his hand, and had just made up his mind to speak — indeed, we have the authority of Mr. Snodgrass's note-book for stating that he had actually opened his mouth — when the waiter entered the room, and said, —

"Some gentlemen, sir."

It has been conjectured that Mr. Pickwick was on the point of delivering some remarks which would have enlightened the world, if not the Thames, when he was

thus interrupted: for he gazed sternly on the waiter's countenance, and then looked round on the company generally, as if seeking for information relative to the new comers.

"Oh!" said Mr. Winkle, rising, "some friends of mine — show them in. Very pleasant fellows," added Mr. Winkle, after the waiter had retired — "Officers of the Ninety-seventh, whose acquaintance I made rather oddly this morning. You will like them very much."

Mr. Pickwick's equanimity was at once restored. The waiter returned, and ushered three gentlemen into the room.

"Lieutenant Tappleton," said Mr. Winkle, "Lieutenant Tappleton, Mr. Pickwick — Doctor Payne, Mr. Pickwick — Mr. Snodgrass, you have seen before: my friend Mr. Tupman, Doctor Payne — Doctor Slammer, Mr. Pickwick — Mr. Tupman, Doctor Slam —"

Here Mr. Winkle suddenly paused; for strong emotion was visible on the countenance both of Mr. Tupman and the Doctor.

"I have met *this* gentleman before," said the doctor, with marked emphasis.

"Indeed!" said Mr. Winkle.

"And — and that person, too, if I am not mistaken," said the doctor, bestowing a scrutinizing glance on the green-coated stranger. "I think I gave that person a very pressing invitation last night, which he thought proper to decline." Saying which, the doctor scowled magnanimously on the stranger, and whispered his friend Lieutenant Tappleton.

"You don't say so," said that gentleman, at the conclusion of the whisper.

"I do, indeed," replied Doctor Slammer.

"You are bound to kick him on the spot," murmured the owner of the camp-stool with great importance.

"*Do* be quiet, Payne," interposed the Lieutenant. "Will you allow me to ask you, sir," he said, addressing Mr. Pickwick, who was considerably mystified by this very unpolite by-play — "Will you allow me to ask you, sir, whether that person belongs to your party?"

"No, sir," replied Mr. Pickwick, "he is a guest of ours."

"He is a member of your club, or I am mistaken?" said the Lieutenant, inquiringly.

"Certainly not," responded Mr. Pickwick.

"And never wears your club-button?" said the Lieutenant.

"No — never!" replied the astonished Mr. Pickwick.

Lieutenant Tappleton turned round to his friend Doctor Slammer, with a scarcely perceptible shrug of the shoulder, as if implying some doubt of the accuracy of his recollection. The little doctor looked wrathful, but confounded; and Mr. Payne gazed with a ferocious aspect on the beaming countenance of the unconscious Pickwick.

"Sir," said the doctor, suddenly addressing Mr. Tupman, in a tone which made that gentleman start as perceptibly as if a pin had been cunningly inserted into the calf of his leg — "you were at the ball here last night?"

Mr. Tupman gasped a faint affirmative; looking very hard at Mr. Pickwick all the while.

"That person was your companion," said the doctor, pointing to the still unmoved stranger.

Mr. Tupman admitted the fact.

"Now, sir," said the doctor to the stranger, "I ask you once again, in the presence of these gentlemen, whether you choose to give me your card, and to receive the treatment of a gentleman; or whether you impose upon me the necessity of personally chastising you on the spot?"

"Stay, sir," said Mr. Pickwick, "I really cannot allow this matter to go any further without some explanation. Tupman, recount the circumstances."

Mr. Tupman, thus solemnly adjured, stated the case in a few words; touched slightly on the borrowing of the coat; expatiated largely on its having been done "after dinner;" wound up with a little penitence on his own account; and left the stranger to clear himself as he best could.

He was apparently about to proceed to do so, when Lieutenant Tappleton, who had been eyeing him with great curiosity, said with considerable scorn — "Havn't I seen you at the theatre, sir?"

"Certainly," replied the unabashed stranger.

"He is a strolling actor," said the Lieutenant, contemptuously; turning to Doctor Slammer — "He acts in the piece that the officers of the Fifty-second get up at the Rochester theatre to-morrow night. You cannot proceed in this affair, Slammer — impossible!"

"Quite!" said the dignified Payne.

"Sorry to have placed you in this disagreeable situation," said Lieutenant Tappleton, addressing Mr. Pickwick, "allow me to suggest, that the best way of avoiding a recurrence of such scenes in future, will be to be more select in the choice of your companions. Good-evening, sir!" and the Lieutenant bounced out of the room.

"And allow *me* to say, sir," said the irascible Doctor Payne, "that if I had been Tappleton, or if I had been Slammer, I would have pulled your nose, sir, and the nose of every man in this company. I would, sir, — every man. Payne is my name, sir — Doctor Payne of the Forty-third. Good-evening, sir." Having concluded this speech, and uttered the three last words in a loud key, he stalked majestically after his friend, closely followed by Doctor Slammer, who said nothing, but contented himself by withering the company with a look.

Rising rage and extreme bewilderment had swelled the noble breast of Mr. Pickwick, almost to the bursting of his waistcoat, during the delivery of the above defiance. He stood transfixed to the spot, gazing on vacancy. The closing of the door recalled him to himself. He rushed forward with fury in his looks, and fire in his eye. His hand was upon the lock of the door; in another instant it would have been on the throat of Doctor Payne of the Forty-third, had not Mr. Snodgrass seized his revered leader by the coat-tail, and dragged him backwards.

"Restrain him," cried Mr. Snodgrass, "Winkle, Tupman — he must not peril his distinguished life in such a cause as this."

"Let me go," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Hold him tight," shouted Mr. Snodgrass; and by the united efforts of the whole company, Mr. Pickwick was forced into an arm-chair.

"Leave him alone," said the green-coated stranger — "brandy and water — jolly old gentleman — lots of pluck — swallow this — ah! capital stuff." Having previously tested the virtues of a bumper, which had

been mixed by the dismal man, the stranger applied the glass to Mr. Pickwick's mouth; and the remainder of its contents rapidly disappeared.

There was a short pause; the brandy and water had done its work; the amiable countenance of Mr. Pickwick was fast recovering its customary expression.

"They are not worth your notice," said the dismal man.

"You are right, sir," replied Mr. Pickwick, "they are not. I am ashamed to have been betrayed into this warmth of feeling. Draw your chair up to the table, sir."

The dismal man readily complied: a circle was again formed round the table, and harmony once more prevailed. Some lingering irritability appeared to find a resting-place in Mr. Winkle's bosom, occasioned possibly by the temporary abstraction of his coat — though it is scarcely reasonable to suppose, that so slight a circumstance can have excited even a passing feeling of anger in a Pickwickian breast. With this exception, their good humor was completely restored; and the evening concluded with the conviviality with which it had begun.

CHAPTER IV.

A FIELD-DAY AND BIVOUAC — MORE NEW FRIENDS AND AN INVITATION TO THE COUNTRY.

MANY authors entertain, not only a foolish, but a really dishonest objection, to acknowledge the sources from whence they derive much valuable information. We have no such feeling. We are merely endeavoring to discharge in an upright manner, the responsible duties of our editorial functions; and whatever ambition we might have felt under other circumstances, to lay claim to the authorship of these adventures, a regard for truth forbids us to do more, than claim the merit of their judicious arrangement, and impartial narration. The Pickwick papers are our New River Head; and we may be compared to the New River Company. The labors of others have raised for us an immense reservoir of important facts. We merely lay them on, and communicate them, in a clear and gentle stream, through the medium of these numbers, to a world thirsting for Pickwickian knowledge.

Acting in this spirit, and resolutely proceeding on our determination to avow our obligations to the authorities we have consulted, we frankly say, that to the note-book of Mr. Snodgrass are we indebted for the particulars recorded in this, and the succeeding chapter — particulars,

which, now that we have disburdened our conscience, we shall proceed to detail without further comment.

The whole population of Rochester and the adjoining towns, rose from their beds at an early hour of the following morning, in a state of the utmost bustle and excitement. A grand review was to take place upon the Lines. The manœuvres of half a dozen regiments were to be inspected by the eagle eye of the commander-in-chief; temporary fortifications had been erected, the citadel was to be attacked and taken, and a mine was to be sprung.

Mr. Pickwick was, as our readers may have gathered from the slight extract we gave from his description of Chatham, an enthusiastic admirer of the army. Nothing could have been more delightful to him — nothing could have harmonized so well with the peculiar feeling of each of his companions — as this sight. Accordingly they were soon a-foot, and walking in the direction of the scene of action, towards which crowds of people were already pouring, from a variety of quarters.

The appearance of everything on the Lines denoted that the approaching ceremony was one of the utmost grandeur and importance. There were sentries posted to keep the ground for the troops, and servants on the batteries keeping places for the ladies, and sergeants running to and fro, with vellum-covered books under their arms, and Colonel Bulder, in full military uniform, on horseback, galloping first to one place and then to another, and backing his horse among the people, and prancing, and curvetting, and shouting in a most alarming manner, and making himself very hoarse in the voice, and very red in the face, without any assignable cause or reason whatever. Officers were running back-

wards and forwards, first communicating with Colonel Bulder, and then ordering the sergeants, and then running away altogether: and even the very privates themselves looked from behind their glazed stocks with an air of mysterious solemnity, which sufficiently bespoke the special nature of the occasion.

Mr. Pickwick and his three companions stationed themselves in the front rank of the crowd, and patiently awaited the commencement of the proceedings. The throng was increasing every moment; and the efforts they were compelled to make, to retain the position they had gained, sufficiently occupied their attention during the two hours that ensued. At one time there was a sudden pressure from behind; and then Mr. Pickwick was jerked forward for several yards, with a degree of speed and elasticity highly inconsistent with the general gravity of his demeanor; at another moment there was a request to "keep back" from the front, and then the butt end of a musket was either dropped upon Mr. Pickwick's toe, to remind him of the demand, or thrust into his chest to insure its being complied with. Then some facetious gentlemen on the left, after pressing sideways in a body, and squeezing Mr. Snodgrass into the very last extreme of human torture, would request to know "vere he vos a shovin' to," and when Mr. Winkle had done expressing his excessive indignation at witnessing this unprovoked assault, some person behind would knock his hat over his eyes, and beg the favor of his putting his head in his pocket. These, and other practical witticisms, coupled with the unaccountable absence of Mr. Tupman (who had suddenly disappeared, and was nowhere to be found), rendered their situation upon the whole rather more uncomfortable, than pleasing or desirable.

At length that low roar of many voices ran through the crowd, which usually announces the arrival of whatever they have been waiting for. All eyes were turned in the direction of the sally-port. A few moments of eager expectation, and colors were seen fluttering gayly in the air, arms glistened brightly in the sun: column after column poured on to the plain. The troops halted and formed; the word of command rung through the line, there was a general clash of muskets, as arms were presented; and the commander-in-chief, attended by Colonel Bulder and numerous officers, cantered to the front. The military bands struck up altogether: the horses stood upon two legs each, cantered backwards, and whisked their tails about in all directions: the dogs barked, the mob screamed, the troops recovered, and nothing was to be seen on either side, as far as the eye could reach, but a long perspective of red coats and white trousers, fixed and motionless.

Mr. Pickwick had been so fully occupied in falling about, and disentangling himself, miraculously, from between the legs of horses, that he had not enjoyed sufficient leisure to observe the scene before him, until it assumed the appearance we have just described. When he was at last enabled to stand firmly on his legs, his gratification and delight were unbounded.

"Can anything be finer, or more delightful?" he inquired of Mr. Winkle.

"Nothing," replied that gentleman, who had had a short man standing on each of his feet, for the quarter of an hour immediately preceding.

"It is indeed a noble and a brilliant sight," said Mr. Snodgrass, in whose bosom a blaze of poetry was rapidly bursting forth, "to see the gallant defenders of their coun-

try, drawn up in brilliant array before its peaceful citizens: their faces beaming — not with warlike ferocity, but with civilized gentleness: their eyes flashing — not with the rude fire of rapine or revenge, but with the soft light of humanity and intelligence."

Mr. Pickwick fully entered into the spirit of this eulogium, but he could not exactly reëcho its terms; for the soft light of intelligence burnt rather feebly in the eyes of the warriors, inasmuch as the command "eyes front" had been given; and all the spectator saw before him was several thousand pair of optics, staring straight forward, wholly divested of any expression whatever.

"We are in a capital situation, now," said Mr. Pickwick, looking round him. The crowd had gradually dispersed from their immediate vicinity, and they were nearly alone.

"Capital!" echoed both Mr. Snodgrass and Mr. Winkle.

"What are they doing now?" inquired Mr. Pickwick, adjusting his spectacles.

"I — I — rather think," said Mr. Winkle, changing color — "I rather think they're going to fire."

"Nonsense," said Mr. Pickwick, hastily.

"I — I — really think they are," urged Mr. Snodgrass, somewhat alarmed.

"Impossible," replied Mr. Pickwick. He had hardly uttered the word, when the whole half-dozen regiments levelled their muskets as if they had but one common object, and that object the Pickwickians; and burst forth with the most awful and tremendous discharge, that ever shook the earth to its centre, or an elderly gentleman off his.

It was in this trying situation, exposed to a galling fire of blank cartridges, and harassed by the operations of the military, a fresh body of whom had begun to fall in, on the opposite side, that Mr. Pickwick displayed that perfect coolness and self-possession, which are the indispensable accompaniments of a great mind. He seized Mr. Winkle by the arm, and placing himself between that gentleman and Mr. Snodgrass, earnestly besought them to remember that beyond the possibility of being rendered deaf by the noise, there was no immediate danger to be apprehended from the firing.

"But — but — suppose some of the men should happen to have ball cartridges by mistake," remonstrated Mr. Winkle, pallid at the supposition he was himself conjuring up. "I heard something whistle through the air just now — so sharp: close to my ear."

"We had better throw ourselves on our faces, hadn't we?" said Mr. Snodgrass.

"No, no — it's over now," said Mr. Pickwick. His lip might quiver, and his cheek might blanch, but no expression of fear or concern escaped the lips of that immortal man.

Mr. Pickwick was right: the firing ceased; but he had scarcely time to congratulate himself on the accuracy of his opinion, when a quick movement was visible in the line: the hoarse shout of the word of command ran along it, and before either of the party could form a guess at the meaning of this new manœuvre, the whole of the half-dozen regiments, with fixed bayonets, charged at double quick time down upon the very spot on which Mr. Pickwick and his friends were stationed.

Man is but mortal; and there is a point beyond which

human courage cannot extend. Mr. Pickwick gazed through his spectacles for an instant on the advancing mass; and then fairly turned his back and — we will not say fled; firstly, because it is an ignoble term, and, secondly, because Mr. Pickwick's figure was by no means adapted for that mode of retreat — he trotted away, at as quick a rate as his legs would convey him; so quickly, indeed, that he did not perceive the awkwardness of his situation, to the full extent, until too late.

The opposite troops, whose falling-in had perplexed Mr. Pickwick a few seconds before, were drawn up to repel the mimic attack of the sham besiegers of the citadel; and the consequence was, that Mr. Pickwick and his two companions found themselves suddenly enclosed between two lines of great length; the one advancing at a rapid pace, and the other firmly waiting the collision in hostile array.

"Hoi!" shouted the officers of the advancing line —

"Get out of the way," cried the officers of the stationary one.

"Where are we to go to?" screamed the agitated Pickwickians.

"Hoi — hoi — hoi," was the only reply. There was a moment of intense bewilderment, a heavy tramp of footsteps, a violent concussion; a smothered laugh — the half-dozen regiments were half a thousand yards off; and the soles of Mr. Pickwick's boots were elevated in air.

Mr. Snodgrass and Mr. Winkle had each performed a compulsory somerset with remarkable agility, when the first object that met the eyes of the latter as he sat on the ground, staunching with a yellow silk handker-

chief the stream of life which issued from his nose, was his venerated leader at some distance off, running after his own hat, which was gamboling playfully away in perspective.

There are very few moments in a man's existence, when he experiences so much ludicrous distress, or meets with so little charitable commiseration, as when he is in pursuit of his own hat. A vast deal of coolness, and a peculiar degree of judgment, are requisite in catching a hat. A man must not be precipitate, or he runs over it: he must not rush into the opposite extreme, or he loses it altogether. The best way is, to keep gently up with the object of pursuit, to be wary and cautious, to watch your opportunity well, get gradually before it, then make a rapid dive, seize it by the crown, and stick it firmly on your head: smiling pleasantly all the time, as if you thought it as good a joke as anybody else.

There was a fine gentle wind, and Mr. Pickwick's hat rolled sportively before it. The wind puffed, and Mr. Pickwick puffed, and the hat rolled over and over as merrily as a lively porpoise in a strong tide; and on it might have rolled, far beyond Mr. Pickwick's reach, had not its course been providentially stopped, just as that gentleman was on the point of resigning it to its fate.

Mr. Pickwick, we say, was completely exhausted, and about to give up the chase, when the hat was blown with some violence against the wheel of a carriage, which was drawn up in a line with half-a-dozen other vehicles, on the spot to which his steps had been directed. Mr. Pickwick, perceiving his advantage, darted briskly forward, secured his property, planted it on his head, and paused to take breath. He had not been stationary half

a minute, when he heard his own name eagerly pronounced by a voice, which he at once recognized as Mr. Tupman's, and, looking upwards, he beheld a sight which filled him with surprise and pleasure.

In an open barouche, the horses of which had been taken out, the better to accommodate it to the crowded place, stood a stout old gentleman, in a blue coat and bright buttons, corduroy breeches and top-boots, two young ladies in scarfs and feathers, a young gentleman apparently enamored of one of the young ladies in scarfs and feathers, a lady of doubtful age, probably the aunt of the aforesaid, and Mr. Tupman, as easy and unconcerned as if he had belonged to the family from the first moments of his infancy. Fastened up behind the barouche was a hamper of spacious dimensions — one of those hampers which always awakens in a contemplative mind, associations connected with cold fowls, tongue, and bottles of wine — and on the box sat a fat and red-faced boy, in a state of somnolency, whom no speculative observer could have regarded for an instant without setting down as the official dispenser of the contents of the before-mentioned hamper, when the proper time for their consumption should arrive.

Mr. Pickwick had bestowed a hasty glance on these interesting objects, when he was again greeted by his faithful disciple.

"Pickwick — Pickwick," said Mr. Tupman; "come up here. Make haste."

"Come along, sir. Pray, come up," said the stout gentleman. "Joe! — damn that boy, he's gone to sleep again — Joe, let down the steps." The fat boy rolled slowly off the box, let down the steps, and held the carriage door invitingly open. Mr. Snodgrass and Mr. Winkle came up at the moment.

"Room for you all, gentlemen," said the stout man. "Two inside, and one out. Joe, make room for one of these gentlemen on the box. Now, sir, come along;" and the stout gentleman extended his arm, and pulled first Mr. Pickwick, and then Mr. Snodgrass, into the barouche by main force. Mr. Winkle mounted to the box, the fat boy waddled to the same perch, and fell fast asleep instantly.

"Well, gentlemen," said the stout man, "very glad to see you. Know you very well, gentlemen, though you mayn't remember me. I spent some ev'nin's at your club last winter — picked up my friend Mr. Tupman here this morning, and very glad I was to see him. Well, sir, and how are you? You do look uncommon well, to be sure."

Mr. Pickwick acknowledged the compliment, and cordially shook hands with the stout gentleman in the top-boots.

"Well, and how are you, sir?" said the stout gentleman, addressing Mr. Snodgrass with paternal anxiety. "Charming, eh? Well, that's right — that's right. And how are you, sir (to Mr. Winkle)? Well, I am glad to hear you say you are well; very glad I am, to be sure. My daughters, gentlemen — my gals these are; and that's my sister, Miss Rachael Wardle. She's a Miss she is; and yet she a'n't a Miss — eh, sir — eh!" And the stout gentleman playfully inserted his elbow between the ribs of Mr. Pickwick, and laughed very heartily.

"Lor, brother?" said Miss Wardle, with a deprecating smile.

"True, true," said the stout gentlemen; "no one can deny it. Gentlemen, I beg your pardon; this is my friend Mr. Trundle. And now you all know each other

let's be comfortable and happy, and see what's going forward; that's what I say." So the stout gentleman put on his spectacles, and Mr. Pickwick pulled out his glass, and everybody stood up in the carriage, and looked over somebody else's shoulder at the evolutions of the military.

Astounding evolutions they were, one rank firing over the heads of another rank, and then running away; and then the other rank firing over the heads of another rank, and running away in their turn; and then forming squares, with officers in the centre; and then descending the trench on one side with scaling-ladders, and ascending it on the other again by the same means; and knocking down barricades of baskets, and behaving in the most gallant manner possible. Then there was such a ramming down of the contents of enormous guns on the battery, with instruments like magnified mops; such a preparation before they were let off, and such an awful noise when they did go, that the air resounded with the screams of ladies. The young Miss Wardles were so frightened, that Mr. Trundle was actually obliged to hold one of them up in the carriage, while Mr. Snodgrass supported the other, and Mr. Wardle's sister suffered under such a dreadful state of nervous alarm, that Mr. Tupman found it indispensably necessary to put his arm round her waist to keep her up at all. Everybody was excited, except the fat boy, and he slept as soundly as if the roaring of cannon were his ordinary lullaby.

"Joe, Joe!" said the stout gentleman, when the citadel was taken, and the besiegers and besieged sat down to dinner. "Damn that boy, he's gone to sleep again. Be good enough to pinch him, sir — in the leg, if you please; nothing else wakes him — thank you. Undo the hamper, Joe."

The fat boy, who had been effectually roused by the compression of a portion of his leg between the finger and thumb of Mr. Winkle, rolled off the box once again, and proceeded to unpack the hamper, with more expedition than could have been expected from his previous inactivity.

"Now, we must sit close," said the stout gentleman. After a great many jokes about squeezing the ladies' sleeves, and a vast quantity of blushing at sundry jocose proposals, that the ladies should sit in the gentlemen's laps, the whole party were stowed down in the barouche; and the stout gentleman proceeded to hand the things from the fat boy (who had mounted up behind for the purpose) into the carriage.

"Now, Joe, knives and forks." The knives and forks were handed in, and the ladies and gentlemen inside, and Mr. Winkle on the box, were each furnished with those useful implements.

"Plates, Joe, plates." A similar process was employed in the distribution of the crockery.

"Now, Joe, the fowls. Damn that boy; he's gone to sleep again. Joe! Joe!" (Sundry taps on the head with a stick, and the fat boy, with some difficulty, roused from his lethargy). "Come, hand in the eatables."

There was something in the sound of the last word, which roused the unctuous boy. He jumped up: and the leaden eyes, which twinkled behind his mountainous cheeks, leered horribly upon the food as he unpacked it from the basket.

"Now, make haste," said Mr. Wardle; for the fat boy was hanging fondly over a capon, which he seemed wholly unable to part with. The boy sighed deeply, and, bestowing an ardent gaze upon its plumpness, unwillingly consigned it to his master.

"That's right — look sharp. Now the tongue — now the pigeon-pie. Take care of that veal and ham — mind the lobsters — take the salad out of the cloth — give me the dressing." Such were the hurried orders which issued from the lips of Mr. Wardle, as he handed in the different articles described, and placed dishes in everybody's hands, and on everybody's knees, in endless number.

"Now, a'n't this capital!" inquired that jolly personage, when the work of destruction had commenced.

"Capital!" said Mr. Winkle, who was carving a fowl on the box.

"Glass of wine?"

"With the greatest pleasure."

"You'd better have a bottle to yourself, up there, hadn't you?"

"You're very good."

"Joe!"

"Yes, sir." (He wasn't asleep this time, having just succeeded in abstracting a veal patty.)

"Bottle of wine to the gentleman on the box. Glad to see you, sir."

"Thankee." Mr. Winkle emptied his glass, and placed the bottle on the coach-box, by his side.

"Will you permit me to have the pleasure, sir?" said Mr. Trundle to Mr. Winkle.

"With great pleasure," replied Mr. Winkle to Mr. Trundle; and then the two gentlemen took wine, after which they took a glass of wine round, ladies and all.

"How dear Emily is flirting with the strange gentleman," whispered the spinster aunt, with true spinster-aunt-like envy, to her brother Mr. Wardle.

"Oh! I don't know," said the jolly old gentleman;

"all very natural, I dare say — nothing unusual. Mr. Pickwick, some wine, sir?" Mr. Pickwick, who had been deeply investigating the interior of the pigeon-pie, readily assented.

"Emily, my dear," said the spinster aunt, with a patronizing air, "don't talk so loud, love."

"Lor, aunt!"

"Aunt and the little old gentleman want to have it all to themselves, I think," whispered Miss Isabella Wardle to her sister Emily. The young ladies laughed very heartily, and the old one tried to look amiable, but couldn't manage it.

"Young girls have *such* spirits," said Miss Wardle to Mr. Tupman, with an air of gentle commiseration, as if animal spirits were contraband, and their possession without a permit, a high crime and misdemeanor.

"Oh, they have," replied Mr. Tupman, not exactly making the sort of reply that was expected from him. "It's quite delightful."

"Hem!" said Miss Wardle, rather dubiously.

"Will you permit me," said Mr. Tupman, in his blandest manner, touching the enchanting Rachael's wrist with one hand, and gently elevating the bottle with the other. "Will you permit me?"

"Oh, sir!" Mr. Tupman looked most impressive; and Rachael expressed her fear that more guns were going off, in which case, of course, she would have required support again.

"Do you think my dear nieces pretty?" whispered their affectionate aunt to Mr. Tupman.

"I should if their aunt wasn't here," replied the ready Pickwickian, with a passionate glance.

"Oh, you naughty man — but really, if their complex-

ions were a *little* better, don't you think they would be nice-looking girls — by candle-light?"

"Yes; I think they would;" said Mr. Tupman, with an air of indifference.

"Oh, you quiz — I know what you were going to say."

"What?" inquired Mr. Tupman, who had not precisely made up his mind to say anything at all.

"You were going to say, that Isabella stoops — I know you were — you men are such observers. Well, so she does; it can't be denied; and certainly, if there is one thing more than another that makes a girl look ugly, it is stooping. I often tell her, that when she gets a little older, she'll be quite frightful. Well, you *are* a quiz!"

Mr. Tupman had no objection to earning the reputation at so cheap a rate: so he looked very knowing, and smiled mysteriously.

"What a sarcastic smile," said the admiring Rachael; "I declare I'm quite afraid of you."

"Afraid of me!"

"Oh, you can't disguise anything from me — I know what that smile means, very well."

"What?" said Mr. Tupman, who had not the slightest notion himself.

"You mean," said the amiable aunt, sinking her voice still lower — "You mean, that you don't think Isabella's stooping is as bad as Emily's boldness. Well, she *is* bold! You cannot think how wretched it makes me sometimes — I'm sure I cry about it for hours together — my dear brother is *so* good, and *so* unsuspicious, that he never sees it; if he did, I'm quite certain it would break his heart. I wish I could think it was only manner — I hope it may be —" (here the affectionate

relative heaved a deep sigh, and shook her head despondingly).

"I'm sure aunt's talking about us," whispered Miss Emily Wardle to her sister — "I'm quite certain of it — she looks so malicious."

"Is she?" replied Isabella — "Hem! aunt, dear!"

"Yes, my dear love!"

"I'm *so* afraid you'll catch cold, aunt — have a silk handkerchief to tie round your dear old head — you really should take care of yourself — consider your age!"

However well deserved this piece of retaliation might have been, it was as vindictive a one as could well have been resorted to. There is no guessing in what form of reply the aunt's indignation would have vented itself, had not Mr. Wardle unconsciously changed the subject, by calling emphatically for Joe.

"Damn that boy," said the old gentleman, "he's gone to sleep again."

"Very extraordinary boy, that," said Mr. Pickwick, "does he always sleep in this way?"

"Sleep!" said the old gentleman, "he's always asleep. Goes on errands fast asleep, and snores as he waits at table."

"How very odd!" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Ah! odd indeed," returned the old gentleman; "I'm proud of that boy — wouldn't part with him on any account — he's a natural curiosity! Here, Joe — Joe — take these things away, and open another bottle — d'ye hear?"

The fat boy rose, opened his eyes, swallowed the huge piece of pie he had been in the act of masticating when he last fell asleep, and slowly obeyed his master's orders

— gloating languidly over the remains of the feast, as he removed the plates, and deposited them in the hamper. The fresh bottle was produced, and speedily emptied. the hamper was made fast in its old place — the fat boy once more mounted the box — the spectacles and pocket-glass were again adjusted — and the evolutions of the military recommenced. There was a great fizzing and banging of guns, and starting of ladies — and then a mine was sprung, to the gratification of everybody — and when the mine had gone off, the military and the company followed its example, and went off too.

"Now, mind," said the old gentleman, as he shook hands with Mr. Pickwick at the conclusion of a conversation which had been carried on at intervals, during the conclusion of the proceedings — "we shall see you all to-morrow."

"Most certainly," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"You have got the address?"

"Manor Farm, Dingley Dell," said Mr. Pickwick, consulting his pocket-book.

"That's it," said the old gentleman. "I don't let you off, mind, under a week; and undertake that you shall see everything worth seeing. If you've come down for a country life, come to me, and I'll give you plenty of it. Joe — damn that boy, he's gone to sleep again — Joe, help Tom put in the horses."

The horses were put in — the driver mounted — the fat boy clambered up by his side — farewells were exchanged — and the carriage rattled off. As the Pickwickians turned round to take a last glimpse of it, the setting sun cast a rich glow on the faces of their entertainers, and fell upon the form of the fat boy. His head was sunk upon his bosom; and he slumbered again.

CHAPTER V.

A SHORT ONE — SHOWING, AMONG OTHER MATTERS, HOW MR. PICKWICK UNDERTOOK TO DRIVE, AND MR. WINKLE TO RIDE; AND HOW THEY BOTH DID IT.

BRIGHT and pleasant was the sky, balmy the air, and beautiful the appearance of every object around, as Mr. Pickwick leant over the balustrades of Rochester Bridge, contemplating nature, and waiting for breakfast. The scene was indeed one, which might well have charmed a far less reflective mind, than that to which it was presented.

On the left of the spectator lay the ruined wall, broken in many places, and in some, overhanging the narrow beach below in rude and heavy masses. Huge knots of sea-weed hung upon the jagged and pointed stones, trembling in every breath of wind; and the green ivy clung mournfully round the dark and ruined battlements. Behind it rose the ancient castle, its towers roofless, and its massive walls crumbling away, but telling us proudly of its old might and strength, as when, seven hundred years ago, it rang with the clash of arms, or resounded with the noise of feasting and revelry. On either side, the banks of the Medway, covered with corn-fields and pastures, with here and there a wind-

mill, or a distant church, stretched away as far as the eye could see, presenting a rich and varied landscape, rendered more beautiful by the changing shadows which passed swiftly across it, as the thin and half-formed clouds skimmed away in the light of the morning sun. The river, reflecting the clear blue of the sky, glistened and sparkled as it flowed noiselessly on; and the oars of the fishermen dipped into the water with a clear and liquid sound, as the heavy but picturesque boats glided slowly down the stream.

Mr. Pickwick was roused from the agreeable revery into which he had been led by the objects before him, by a deep sigh, and a touch on his shoulder. He turned round: and the dismal man was at his side.

"Contemplating the scene?" inquired the dismal man.

"I was," said Mr. Pickwick.

"And congratulating yourself on being up so soon?" Mr. Pickwick nodded assent.

"Ah! people need to rise early, to see the sun in all his splendor, for his brightness seldom lasts the day through. The morning of day and the morning of life are but too much alike."

"You speak truly, sir," said Mr. Pickwick.

"How common the saying," continued the dismal man, "'The morning's too fine to last.' How well might it be applied to our every-day existence. God! what would I forfeit to have the days of my childhood restored, or to be able to forget them forever!"

"You have seen much trouble, sir," said Mr. Pickwick, compassionately.

"I have," said the dismal man, hurriedly; "I have. More than those who see me now would believe pos-

sible." He paused for an instant, and then said, abruptly,

"Did it ever strike you, on such a morning as this, that drowning would be happiness and peace?"

"God bless me, no!" replied Mr. Pickwick, edging a little from the balustrade, as the possibility of the dismal man's tipping him over, by way of experiment, occurred to him rather forcibly.

"*I* have thought so, often," said the dismal man, without noticing the action. "The calm, cool water seems to me to murmur an invitation to repose and rest. A bound, a splash, a brief struggle; there is an eddy for an instant, it gradually subsides into a gentle ripple; the waters have closed above your head, and the world has closed upon your miseries and misfortunes forever." The sunken eye of the dismal man flashed brightly as he spoke, but the momentary excitement quickly subsided; and he turned calmly away, as he said —

"There — enough of that. I wish to see you on another subject. You invited me to read that paper, the night before last, and listened attentively while I did so."

"I did," replied Mr. Pickwick; "and I certainly thought"——

"I asked for no opinion," said the dismal man, interrupting him, "and I want none. You are travelling for amusement and instruction. Suppose I forwarded you a curious manuscript — observe, not curious because wild or improbable, but curious as a leaf from the romance of real life. Would you communicate it to the club, of which you have spoken so frequently?"

"Certainly," replied Mr. Pickwick, "if you wished it; and it would be entered on their Transactions."

"You shall have it," replied the dismal man. "Your address;" and, Mr. Pickwick having communicated their probable route, the dismal man carefully noted it down in a greasy pocket-book, and, resisting Mr. Pickwick's pressing invitation to breakfast, left that gentleman at his inn, and walked slowly away.

Mr. Pickwick found that his three companions had risen, and were waiting his arrival to commence breakfast, which was ready laid in tempting display. They sat down to the meal; and broiled ham, eggs, tea, coffee, and sundries, began to disappear with a rapidity which at once bore testimony to the excellence of the fare, and the appetites of its consumers.

"Now, about Manor Farm," said Mr. Pickwick. "How shall we go?"

"We had better consult the waiter, perhaps," said Mr. Tupman, and the waiter was summoned accordingly.

"Dingley Dell, gentlemen — fifteen miles, gentlemen — cross-road — post-chaise, sir?"

"Post-chaise won't hold more than two," said Mr. Pickwick.

"True, sir — beg your pardon, sir. — Very nice four-wheel chaise, sir — seat for two behind — one in front for the gentleman that drives — oh! beg your pardon, sir — that'll only hold three."

"What's to be done?" said Mr. Snodgrass.

"Perhaps one of the gentlemen like to ride, sir," suggested the waiter, looking towards Mr. Winkle; "very good saddle-horses, sir — any of Mr. Wardle's men coming to Rochester, bring 'em back, sir."

"The very thing," said Mr. Pickwick. "Winkle, will you go on horseback?"

Now Mr. Winkle did entertain considerable misgivings

in the very lowest recesses of his own heart, relative to his equestrian skill; but, as he would not have them even suspected on any account, he at once replied with great hardihood, "Certainly. I should enjoy it, of all things."

Mr. Winkle had rushed upon his fate; there was no resource. "Let them be at the door by eleven," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Very well, sir," replied the waiter.

The waiter retired; the breakfast concluded; and the travellers ascended to their respective bedrooms, to prepare a change of clothing, to take with them on their approaching expedition.

Mr. Pickwick had made his preliminary arrangements, and was looking over the coffee-room blinds at the passengers in the street, when the waiter entered, and announced that the chaise was ready — an announcement which the vehicle itself confirmed, by forthwith appearing before the coffee-room blinds aforesaid.

It was a curious little green box on four wheels, with a low place like a wine-bin for two behind, and an elevated perch for one in front, drawn by an immense brown horse, displaying great symmetry of bone. An hostler stood near, holding by the bridle another immense horse — apparently a near relative of the animal in the chaise — ready saddled for Mr. Winkle.

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Pickwick, as they stood upon the pavement while the coats were being put in. "Bless my soul! who's to drive? I never thought of that."

"Oh! you, of course," said Mr. Tupman.

"Of course," said Mr. Snodgrass.

"I!" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick.

"Not the slightest fear, sir," interposed the hostler. "Warrant him quiet, sir; a hinfant in arms might drive him."

"He don't shy, does he?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"Shy, sir? — He wouldn't shy if he was to meet a vaggin-load of monkeys, with their tails burnt off."

The last recommendation was indisputable. Mr. Tupman and Mr. Snodgrass got into the bin; Mr Pickwick ascended to his perch, and deposited his feet on a floor-clothed shelf, erected beneath it, for that purpose.

"Now, shiny Villiam," said the hostler to the deputy hostler, "give the gen'lm'n the ribbins." "Shiny Villiam" — so called, probably, from his sleek hair and oily countenance — placed the reins in Mr. Pickwick's left hand; and the upper hostler thrust a whip into his right.

"Wo — o!" cried Mr. Pickwick, as the tall quadruped evinced a decided inclination to back into the coffee-room window.

"Wo — o!" echoed Mr. Tupman and Mr. Snodgrass, from the bin.

"Only his playfulness, gen'lm'n," said the head hostler, encouragingly; "jist kitch hold on him, Villiam." The deputy restrained the animal's impetuosity, and the principal ran to assist Mr. Winkle in mounting.

"T'other side, sir, if you please."

"Blowed if the gen'lm'n worn't a gettin' up on the wrong side," whispered a grinning post-boy, to the inexpressibly gratified waiter.

Mr. Winkle, thus instructed, climbed into his saddle, with about as much difficulty as he would have experienced in getting up the side of a first-rate man-of-war.

"All right?" inquired Mr. Pickwick, with an inward presentiment that it was all wrong.

"All right," replied Mr. Winkle faintly.

"Let 'em go," cried the hostler,—"Hold him in, sir;" and away went the chaise, and the saddle-horse, with Mr. Pickwick on the box of the one, and Mr. Winkle on the back of the other, to the delight and gratification of the whole inn-yard.

"What makes him go sideways?" said Mr. Snodgrass in the bin, to Mr. Winkle in the saddle.

"I can't imagine," replied Mr. Winkle. His horse was drifting up the street in the most mysterious manner — side first, with his head towards one side of the way, and his tail towards the other.

Mr. Pickwick had no leisure to observe either this, or any other particular, the whole of his faculties being concentrated in the management of the animal attached to the chaise, who displayed various peculiarities, highly interesting to a by-stander, but by no means equally amusing to any one seated behind him. Besides constantly jerking his head up, in a very unpleasant and uncomfortable manner, and tugging at the reins to an extent which rendered it a matter of great difficulty for Mr. Pickwick to hold them, he had a singular propensity for darting suddenly every now and then to the side of the road, then stopping short, and then rushing forward for some minutes, at a speed which it was wholly impossible to control.

"What *can* he mean by this?" said Mr. Snodgrass, when the horse had executed this manœuvre for the twentieth time.

"I don't know," replied Mr. Tupman; "it *looks* very like shying, don't it?" Mr. Snodgrass was about

to reply, when he was interrupted by a shout from Mr. Pickwick.

"Woo," said that gentleman, "I have dropped my whip."

"Winkle," cried Mr. Snodgrass, as the equestrian came trotting up on the tall horse, with his hat over his ears; and shaking all over, as if he would shake to pieces, with the violence of the exercise. "Pick up the whip, there's a good fellow." Mr. Winkle pulled at the bridle of the tall horse till he was black in the face; and having at length succeeded in stopping him, dismounted, handed the whip to Mr. Pickwick, and, grasping the reins, prepared to remount.

Now, whether the tall horse, in the natural playfulness of his disposition, was desirous of having a little innocent recreation with Mr. Winkle, or whether it occurred to him that he could perform the journey as much to his own satisfaction without a rider as with one, are points upon which we can arrive at no definite and distinct conclusion. By whatever motives the animal was actuated, certain it is that Mr. Winkle had no sooner touched the reins, than he slipped them over his head, and darted backward to their full length.

"Poor fellow," said Mr. Winkle, soothingly, — "poor fellow — good old horse." The "poor fellow" was proof against flattery; the more Mr. Winkle tried to get nearer him, the more he sidled away; and, notwithstanding all kinds of coaxing and wheedling, there were Mr. Winkle and the good old horse going round and round each other for ten minutes; at the end of which time, each was at precisely the same distance from the other as when they first commenced — an unsatisfactory sort of thing under any circumstances, but particularly so in a lonely road, where no assistance can be procured.

"What am I to do?" shouted Mr. Winkle, after the dodging had been prolonged for a considerable time. "What am I to do? I can't get on him."

"You had better lead him till we come to a turnpike," replied Mr. Pickwick from the chaise.

"But he won't come," roared Mr. Winkle. "Do come, and hold him."

Mr. Pickwick was the impersonation of kindness and humanity; he threw the reins on the horse's back, and having descended from his seat, carefully drew the chaise into the hedge, lest anything should come along the road, and stepped back to the assistance of his distressed companion, leaving Mr. Tupman and Mr. Snodgrass in the vehicle.

The horse no sooner beheld Mr. Pickwick advancing towards him with the chaise-whip in his hand, than he exchanged the rotatory motion in which he had previously indulged, for a retrograde movement of so very determined a character, that it at once drew Mr. Winkle, who was still at the end of the bridle, at a rather quicker rate than fast walking, in the direction from which they had just come. Mr. Pickwick ran to his assistance, but the faster Mr. Pickwick ran forward, the faster the horse ran backward.

There was a great scraping of feet, and kicking up of the dust; and at last Mr. Winkle, his arms being nearly pulled out of their sockets, fairly let go his hold. The horse paused, stared, shook his head, turned round, and quietly trotted home to Rochester, leaving Mr. Winkle and Mr. Pickwick gazing on each other with countenances of blank dismay. A rattling noise at a little distance attracted their attention. They looked up.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed the agonized Mr. Pickwick, "there's the other horse running away!"

It was but too true. The animal was startled by the noise, and the reins were on his back. The result may be guessed. He tore off with the four-wheeled chaise behind him, and Mr. Tupman and Mr. Snodgrass in the four-wheeled chaise. The heat was a short one. Mr. Tupman threw himself into the hedge, Mr. Snodgrass followed his example, the horse dashed the four-wheeled chaise against a wooden bridge, separated the wheels from the body, and the bin from the perch; and finally stood stock still to gaze upon the ruin he had made.

The first care of the two unspilt friends was to extri cate their unfortunate companions from their bed of quickset — a process which gave them the unspeakable satisfaction of discovering that they had sustained no injury, beyond sundry rents in their garments, and various lacerations from the brambles. The next thing to be done was, to unharness the horse. This complicated process having been effected, the party walked slowly forward, leading the horse among them, and abandoning the chaise to its fate.

An hour's walking brought the travellers to a little road-side public-house, with two elm-trees, a horse-trough, and a sign-post, in front; one or two deformed hay-ricks behind, a kitchen-garden at the side, and rotten sheds and mouldering out-houses jumbled in strange confusion, all about it. A red-headed man was working in the garden; and to him Mr. Pickwick called lustily — "Hallo there!"

The red-headed man raised his body, shaded his eyes with his hand, and stared long and coolly, at Mr. Pickwick and his companions.

"Hallo there!" repeated Mr. Pickwick.

"Hallo!" was the red-headed man's reply.

"How far is it to Dingley Dell?"

"Better er seven mile."

"Is it a good road?"

"No, 'ta'n't." Having uttered this brief reply, and apparently satisfied himself with another scrutiny, the red-headed man resumed his work.

"We want to put this horse up here," said Mr. Pickwick; "I suppose we can, can't we?"

"Want to put that 'ere horse up, do ee?" repeated the red-headed man, leaning on his spade.

"Of course," replied Mr. Pickwick, who had by this time advanced, horse in hand, to the garden rails.

"Missus" — roared the man with the red head, emerging from the garden, and looking very hard at the horse — "Missus."

A tall bony woman — straight all the way down — in a coarse blue pelisse, with the waist an inch or two below her armpits, responded to the call.

"Can we put this horse up here, my good woman?" said Mr. Tupman, advancing, and speaking in his most seductive tones. The woman looked very hard at the whole party; and the red-headed man whispered something in her ear.

"No," replied the woman, after a little consideration, "I'm afeerd on it."

"Afraid!" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick, "what's the woman afraid of?"

"It got us in trouble last time," said the woman, turning into the house; "I woan't have nothin' to say to 'un."

"Most extraordinary thing I ever met with in my life," said the astonished Mr. Pickwick.

"I — I — really believe," whispered Mr. Winkle, as

his friends gathered round him, "that they think we have come by this horse in some dishonest manner."

"What!" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick, in a storm of indignation. Mr. Winkle modestly repeated his suggestion.

"Hallo, you fellow!" said the angry Mr. Pickwick. "Do you think we stole this horse?"

"I'm sure ye did," replied the red-headed man, with a grin which agitated his countenance from one auricular organ to the other. Saying which, he turned into the house, and banged the door after him.

"It's like a dream," — ejaculated Mr. Pickwick, "a hideous dream. The idea of a man's walking about, all day, with a dreadful horse that he can't get rid of!" The depressed Pickwickians turned moodily away, with the tall quadruped, for which they all felt the most unmitigated disgust, following slowly at their heels.

It was late in the afternoon when the four friends and their four-footed companion, turned into the lane leading to Manor Farm: and even when they were so near their place of destination, the pleasure they would otherwise have experienced, was materially damped as they reflected on the singularity of their appearance, and the absurdity of their situation. Torn clothes, lacerated faces, dusty shoes, exhausted looks, and, above all, the horse. Oh, how Mr. Pickwick cursed that horse: he had eyed the noble animal from time to time with looks expressive of hatred and revenge; more than once he had calculated the probable amount of the expense he would incur by cutting his throat; and now the temptation to destroy him, or to cast him loose upon the world, rushed upon his mind with tenfold force. He was roused from a meditation on these dire imaginings, by the sud-

den appearance of two figures, at a turn of the lane. It was Mr. Wardle, and his faithful attendant, the fat boy.

"Why, where *have* you been?" said the hospitable old gentleman, "I've been waiting for you all day. Well, you *do* look tired. What! Scratches! Not hurt I hope — eh? Well, I *am* glad to hear that — very. So you've been spilt, eh? Never mind. Common accidents in these parts. Joe — he's asleep again! — Joe, take that horse from the gentleman, and lead it into the stable."

The fat boy sauntered heavily behind them with the animal; and the old gentleman condoling with his guests in homely phrase, on so much of the day's adventures as they thought proper to communicate, led the way to the kitchen.

"We'll have you put to rights here," said the old gentleman, "and then I'll introduce you to the people in the parlor. Emma, bring out the cherry-brandy; now, Jane, a needle and thread here; towels and water, Mary. Come, girls, bustle about."

Three or four buxom girls speedily dispersed in search of the different articles in requisition, while a couple of large-headed, circular-visaged males rose from their seats in the chimney-corner, (for although it was a May evening, their attachment to the wood fire appeared as cordial as if it were Christmas,) and dived into some obscure recesses, from which they speedily produced a bottle of blacking, and some half-dozen brushes.

"Bustle," said the old gentleman again, but the admonition was quite unnecessary, for one of the girls poured out the cherry-brandy, and another brought in the towels, and one of the men suddenly seizing Mr. Pickwick by

the leg, at the imminent hazard of throwing him off his balance, brushed away at his boot, till his corns were red-hot; while the other shampooed Mr. Winkle with a heavy clothes-brush, indulging, during the operation, in that hissing sound, which hostlers are wont to produce, when engaged in rubbing down a horse.

Mr. Snodgrass, having concluded his ablutions, took a survey of the room, while standing with his back to the fire, sipping his cherry-brandy with heartfelt satisfaction. He describes it, as a large apartment, with a red brick floor, and a capacious chimney; the ceiling garnished with hams, sides of bacon, and ropes of onions. The walls were decorated with several hunting-whips, two or three bridles, a saddle and an old rusty blunderbuss, with an inscription below it, intimating that was "Loaded"—as it had been, on the same authority, for half a century at least. An old eight-day clock, of solemn and sedate demeanor, ticked gravely in one corner; and a silver watch, of equal antiquity, dangled from one of the many hooks which ornamented the dresser.

"Ready?" said the old gentleman inquiringly, when his guests had been washed, mended, brushed, and brandied.

"Quite," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"Come along then," and the party having traversed several dark passages, and being joined by Mr. Tupman, who had lingered behind to snatch a kiss from Emma, for which he had been duly rewarded with sundry pushings and scratchings, arrived at the parlor-door.

"Welcome," said their hospitable host, throwing it open and stepping forward to announce them, "Welcome, gentlemen, to Manor Farm."

CHAPTER VI.

AN OLD-FASHIONED CARD-PARTY — THE CLERGYMAN'S VERSES — THE STORY OF THE CONVICT'S RETURN.

Several guests who were assembled in the old parlor, rose to greet Mr. Pickwick and his friends upon their entrance; and during the performance of the ceremony of introduction, with all due formalities, Mr. Pickwick had leisure to observe the appearance, and speculate upon the characters and pursuits, of the persons by whom he was surrounded — a habit in which he in common with many other great men delighted to indulge.

A very old lady, in a lofty cap and faded silk gown — no less a personage than Mr. Wardle's mother — occupied the post of honor on the right-hand corner of the chimney-piece; and various certificates of her having been brought up in the way she should go when young, and of her not having departed from it when old, ornamented the walls, in the form of samplers of ancient date, worsted landscapes of equal antiquity, and crimson silk teakettle holders of a more modern period. The aunt, the two young ladies, and Mr. Wardle, each vying with the other in paying zealous and unremitting attentions to the old lady, crowded round her easy chair, one holding her ear-trumpet, another an orange, and a third a smelling-bottle, while a fourth was busily engaged in

patting and punching the pillows, which were arranged for her support. On the opposite side, sat a bald-headed old gentleman, with a good-humored benevolent face — the clergyman of Dingley Dell; and next him sat his wife, a stout blooming old lady, who looked as if she were well skilled, not only in the art and mystery of manufacturing home-made cordials greatly to other people's satisfaction, but of tasting them occasionally very much to her own. A little hard-headed, Ripstone pippin-faced man, was conversing with a fat old gentleman in one corner; and two or three more old gentlemen, and two or three more old ladies, sat bolt-upright and motionless on their chairs, staring very hard at Mr. Pickwick and his fellow-voyagers.

"Mr. Pickwick, mother," said Mr. Wardle, at the very top of his voice.

"Ah!" said the old lady, shaking her head; "I can't hear you."

"Mr. Pickwick, grandma!" screamed both the young ladies together.

"Ah!" exclaimed the old lady. "Well; it don't much matter. He don't care for an old 'ooman like me, I dare say."

"I assure you, ma'am," said Mr. Pickwick, grasping the old lady's hand, and speaking so loud that the exertion imparted a crimson hue to his benevolent countenance; "I assure you, ma'am, that nothing delights me more, than to see a lady of your time of life heading so fine a family, and looking so young and well."

"Ah!" said the old lady, after a short pause; "it's all very fine, I dare say; but I can't hear him."

"Grandma's rather put out now," said Miss Isabella Wardle, in a low tone; "but she'll talk to you presently."

Mr. Pickwick nodded his readiness to humor the infirmities of age, and entered into a general conversation with the other members of the circle.

"Delightful situation this," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Delightful!" echoed Messrs. Snodgrass, Tupman, and Winkle.

"Well, I think it is," said Mr. Wardle.

"There a'n't a better spot o' ground in all Kent, sir," said the hard-headed man with the pippin face; "there a'n't indeed, sir — I'm sure there a'n't, sir;" and the hard-headed man looked triumphantly round, as if he had been very much contradicted by somebody, but had got the better of him at last.

"There a'n't a better spot o' ground in all Kent," said the hard-headed man again, after a pause.

"'Cept Mullins's Meadows," observed the fat man, solemnly.

"Mullins's Meadows!" ejaculated the other, with profound contempt.

"Ah, Mullins's Meadows," repeated the fat man.

"Reg'lar good land that," interposed another fat man.

"And so it is, sure-ly," said a third fat man.

"Everybody knows that," said the corpulent host.

The hard-headed man looked dubiously round; but finding himself in a minority, assumed a compassionate air, and said no more.

"What are they talking about?" inquired the old lady of one of her grand-daughters, in a very audible voice; for, like many deaf people, she never seemed to calculate on the possibility of other persons hearing what she said herself.

"About the land, grandma."

"What about the land? — Nothing the matter, is there?"

"No, no. Mr. Miller was saying our land was better than Mullins's Meadows."

"How should he know anything about it?" inquired the old lady indignantly. "Miller's a conceited coxcomb, and you may tell him I said so." Saying which, the old lady, quite unconscious that she had spoken above a whisper, drew herself up, and looked carving knives at the hard-headed delinquent.

"Come, come," said the bustling host, with a natural anxiety to change the conversation, — "What say you to a rubber, Mr. Pickwick?"

"I should like it of all things," replied that gentleman; "but pray don't make up one on my account."

"Oh, I assure you, mother's very fond of a rubber," said Mr. Wardle; "a'n't you, mother?"

The old lady, who was much less deaf on this subject than on any other, replied in the affirmative.

"Joe, Joe," said the old gentleman — "Joe — damn that — oh, here he is! Put out the card-tables."

The lethargic youth contrived without any additional rousing, to set out two card-tables; the one for Pope Joan, and the other for whist. The whist-players were, Mr. Pickwick and the old lady; Mr. Miller and the fat gentleman. The round game comprised the rest of the company.

The rubber was conducted with all that gravity of deportment, and sedateness of demeanor, which befit the pursuit entitled "whist" — a solemn observance, to which, as it appears to us, the title of "game" has been very irreverently and ignominiously applied. The round-game table, on the other hand, was so boisterously merry, as materially to interrupt the contemplations of Mr. Miller, who, not being quite so much absorbed as he ought to

have been, contrived to commit various high crimes and misdemeanors, which excited the wrath of the fat gentleman to a very great extent, and called forth the good-humor of the old lady in a proportionate degree.

"There!" said the criminal Miller triumphantly, as he took up the odd trick at the conclusion of a hand; "that could not have been played better, I flatter myself; — impossible to have made another trick!"

"Miller ought to have trumped the diamond, oughtn't he, sir?" said the old lady.

Mr. Pickwick nodded assent.

"Ought I, though?" said the unfortunate, with a doubtful appeal to his partner.

"You ought, sir," said the fat gentleman in an awful voice.

"Very sorry," said the crest-fallen Miller.

"Much use that," growled the fat gentleman.

"Two by honors makes us eight," said Mr. Pickwick.

Another hand. "Can you one?" inquired the old lady.

"I can," replied Mr. Pickwick. "Double, single, and the rub."

"Never was such luck," said Mr. Miller.

"Never was such cards," said the fat gentleman.

A solemn silence: Mr. Pickwick humorous, the old lady serious, the fat gentleman captious, and Mr. Miller timorous.

"Another double," said the old lady: triumphantly making a memorandum of the circumstance, by placing one sixpence and a battered half-penny under the candlestick.

"A double, sir," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Quite aware of the fact, sir," replied the fat gentleman, sharply.

Another game, with a similar result, was followed by a revoke from the unlucky Miller; on which the fat gentleman burst into a state of high personal excitement which lasted until the conclusion of the game, when he retired into a corner, and remained perfectly mute for one hour and twenty-seven minutes; at the end of which time he emerged from his retirement, and offered Mr. Pickwick a pinch of snuff with the air of a man who has made up his mind to a Christian forgiveness of injuries sustained. The old lady's hearing decidedly improved, and the unlucky Miller felt as much out of his element as a dolphin in a sentry-box.

Meanwhile the round game proceeded right merrily. Isabella Wardle and Mr. Trundle "went partners," and Emily Wardle and Mr. Snodgrass did the same; and even Mr. Tupman and the spinster aunt established a joint-stock company of fish and flattery. Old Mr. Wardle was in the very height of his jollity; and he was *so* funny in his management of the board, and the old ladies were *so* sharp after their winnings, that the whole table was in a perpetual roar of merriment and laughter. There was one old lady who always had about half a dozen cards to pay for, at which everybody laughed, regularly every round; and when the old lady looked cross at having to pay, they laughed louder than ever; on which the old lady's face gradually brightened up, till at last she laughed louder than any of them. Then, when the spinster aunt got "matrimony," the young ladies laughed afresh, and the spinster aunt seemed disposed to be pettish; till, feeling Mr. Tupman squeezing her hand under the table, *she* brightened up too, and looked

rather knowing, as if matrimony in reality were not quite so far off as some people thought for; whereupon everybody laughed again, and especially old Mr. Wardle, who enjoyed a joke as much as the youngest. As to Mr. Snodgrass, he did nothing but whisper poetical sentiments into his partner's ear, which made one old gentleman facetiously sly, about partnerships at cards, and partnerships for life, and caused the aforesaid old gentleman to make some remarks thereupon, accompanied with divers winks and chuckles, which made the company very merry, and the old gentleman's wife especially so. And Mr. Winkle came out with jokes which are very well known in town, but are not at all known in the country: and as everybody laughed at them very heartily, and said they were very capital, Mr. Winkle was in a state of great honor and glory. And the benevolent clergyman looked pleasantly on; for the happy faces which surrounded the table made the good old man feel happy too; and though the merriment was rather boisterous, still it came from the heart and not from the lips: and this is the right sort of merriment, after all.

The evening glided swiftly away, in these cheerful recreations; and when the substantial though homely supper had been despatched, and the little party formed a social circle round the fire, Mr. Pickwick thought he had never felt so happy in his life, and at no time so much disposed to enjoy, and make the most of, the passing moments. "Now this," said the hospitable host, who was sitting in great state next the old lady's arm-chair, with her hand fast clasped in his — "This is just what I like — the happiest moments of my life have been passed at this old fireside: and I am so attached to it, that I keep up a blazing fire here every evening, until it

actually grows too hot to bear it. Why, my poor old mother, here, used to sit before this fireplace upon that little stool, when she was a girl — didn't you, mother ?"

The tear which starts unbidden to the eye when the recollection of old times and the happiness of many years ago, is suddenly recalled, stole down the old lady's face, as she shook her head with a melancholy smile.

"You must excuse my talking about this old place, Mr. Pickwick," resumed the host, after a short pause — "for I love it dearly, and know no other — the old houses and fields seem like living friends to me: and so does our little church with the ivy, — about which, by-the-by, our excellent friend there, made a song when he first came amongst us. Mr. Snodgrass, have you anything in your glass ?"

"Plenty, thank you," replied that gentleman, whose poetic curiosity had been greatly excited by the last observations of his entertainer. "I beg your pardon, but you were talking about the song of the Ivy."

"You must ask our friend opposite about that," said the host knowingly: indicating the clergyman by a nod of his head.

"May I say that I should like to hear you repeat it, sir?" said Mr. Snodgrass.

"Why, really," replied the clergyman, "it's a very slight affair; and the only excuse I have for having ever perpetrated it is, that I was a young man at the time. Such as it is, however, you shall hear it if you wish."

A murmur of curiosity was of course the reply; and the old gentleman proceeded to recite, with the aid of sundry promptings from his wife, the lines in question. 'I call them," said he,

THE IVY GREEN.

Oh, a dainty plant is the Ivy green,
That creepeth o'er ruins old!
Of right choice food are his meals I ween,
In his cell so lone and cold.
The wall must be crumbled, the stone decayed,
To pleasure his dainty whim:
And the mouldering dust that years have made,
Is a merry meal for him.
Creeping where no life is seen,
A rare old plant is the Ivy green.

Fast he stealeth on, though he wears no wings,
And a staunch old heart has he.
How closely he twineth, how tight he clings,
To his friend the huge Oak Tree!
And slyly he traileth along the ground,
And his leaves he gently waves,
As he joyously hugs and crawleth round
The rich mould of dead men's graves.
Creeping where grim death has been,
A rare old plant is the Ivy green.

Whole ages have fled and their works decayed,
And nations have scattered been;
But the stout old Ivy shall never fade,
From its hale and hearty green.
The brave old plant in its lonely days,
Shall fatten upon the past:
For the stateliest building man can raise,
Is the Ivy's food at last.
Creeping on, where time has been,
A rare old plant is the Ivy green.

While the old gentleman repeated these lines a second time, to enable Mr. Snodgrass to note them down, Mr. Pickwick perused the lineaments of his face with an expression of great interest. The old gentleman having concluded his dictation, and Mr. Snodgrass having

returned his note-book to his pocket, Mr. Pickwick said:

"Excuse me, sir, for making the remark on so short an acquaintance; but a gentleman like yourself cannot fail, I should think, to have observed many scenes and incidents worth recording, in the course of your experience as a minister of the Gospel."

"I have witnessed some, certainly," replied the old gentleman; "but the incidents and characters have been of a homely and ordinary nature, my sphere of action being so very limited."

"You *did* make some notes, I think, about John Edmunds, did you not?" inquired Mr. Wardle, who appeared desirous to draw his friend out, for the edification of his new visitors.

The old gentleman slightly nodded his head in token of assent, and was proceeding to change the subject, when Mr. Pickwick said:

"I beg your pardon, sir; but pray, if I may venture to inquire, who was John Edmunds?"

"The very thing I was about to ask," said Mr. Snod grass, eagerly.

"You are fairly in for it," said the jolly host. "You must satisfy the curiosity of these gentlemen, sooner or later; so you had better take advantage of this favorable opportunity, and do so at once."

The old gentleman smiled good-humoredly as he drew his chair forward; the remainder of the party drew their chairs closer together, especially Mr. Tupman and the spinster aunt, who were possibly rather hard of hearing; and the old lady's ear-trumpet having been duly adjusted, and Mr. Miller (who had fallen asleep during the recital of the verses) roused from his slumbers by an admoni-

tory pinch, administered beneath the table by his ex-partner the solemn fat man, the old gentleman, without further preface, commenced the following tale, to which we take the liberty of prefixing the title of

THE CONVICT'S RETURN.

"When I first settled in this village," said the old gentleman, "which is now just five-and-twenty years ago, the most notorious person among my parishioners was a man of the name of Edmunds, who leased a small farm near this spot. He was a morose, savage-hearted, bad man: idle and dissolute in his habits; cruel and ferocious in his disposition. Beyond the few lazy and reckless vagabonds with whom he sauntered away his time in the fields, or sotted in the ale-house, he had not a single friend or acquaintance; no one cared to speak to the man whom many feared, and every one detested — and Edmunds was shunned by all.

"This man had a wife and one son, who, when I first came here, was about twelve years old. Of the acuteness of that woman's sufferings, of the gentle and enduring manner in which she bore them, of the agony of solicitude with which she reared that boy, no one can form an adequate conception. Heaven forgive me the supposition, if it be an uncharitable one, but I do firmly and in my soul believe, that the man systematically tried for many years to break her heart; but she bore it all for her child's sake, and, however strange it may seem to many, for his father's too; for brute as he was and cruelly as he had treated her, she had loved him once; and the recollection of what he had been to her, awak-

ened feelings of forbearance and meekness under suffering in her bosom, to which all God's creatures, but women, are strangers.

"They were poor — they could not be otherwise when the man pursued such courses; but the woman's unceasing and unwearied exertions, early and late, morning, noon, and night, kept them above actual want. Those exertions were but ill repaid. People who passed the spot in the evening — sometimes at a late hour of the night — reported that they had heard the moans and sobs of a woman in distress, and the sound of blows; and more than once, when it was past midnight, the boy knocked softly at the door of a neighbor's house, whither he had been sent, to escape the drunken fury of his unnatural father.

"During the whole of this time, and when the poor creature often bore about her marks of ill-usage and violence which she could not wholly conceal, she was a constant attendant at our little church. Regularly every Sunday, morning and afternoon, she occupied the same seat with the boy at her side; and though they were both poorly dressed — much more so than many of their neighbors who were in a lower station — they were always neat and clean. Every one had a friendly nod and a kind word for 'poor Mrs. Edmunds;' and sometimes, when she stopped to exchange a few words with a neighbor at the conclusion of the service, in the little row of elm-trees which leads to the church-porch, or lingered behind to gaze with a mother's pride and fondness upon her healthy boy, as he sported before her with some little companions, her care-worn face would lighten up with an expression of heartfelt gratitude; and she would look, if not cheerful and happy, at least tranquil and contented.

"Five or six years passed; the boy had become a robust and well-grown youth. The time that had strengthened the child's slight frame and knit his weak limbs into the strength of manhood, had bowed his mother's form, and enfeebled her steps; but the arm that should have supported her was no longer locked in hers; the face that should have cheered her, no more looked upon her own. She occupied her old seat, but there was a vacant one beside her. The Bible was kept as carefully as ever, the places were found and folded down as they used to be; but there was no one to read it with her; and the tears fell thick and fast upon the book, and blotted the words from her eyes. Neighbors were as kind as they were wont to be of old, but she shunned their greetings with averted head. There was no lingering among the old elm-trees now — no cheering anticipations of happiness yet in store. The desolate woman drew her bonnet closer over her face, and walked hurriedly away.

"Shall I tell you, that the young man, who, looking back to the earliest of his childhood's days to which memory and consciousness extended, and carrying his recollection down to that moment, could remember nothing which was not in some way connected with a long series of voluntary privations suffered by his mother for his sake, with ill-usage, and insult, and violence, and all endured for him; — shall I tell you, that he, with a reckless disregard of her breaking heart, and a sullen wilful forgetfulness of all she had done and borne for him, had linked himself with depraved and abandoned men, and was madly pursuing a headlong career, which must bring death to him, and shame to her? Alas for human nature! You have anticipated it long since.

"The measure of the unhappy woman's misery and misfortune was about to be completed. Numerous offences had been committed in the neighborhood; the perpetrators remained undiscovered, and their boldness increased. A robbery of a daring and aggravated nature occasioned a vigilance of pursuit, and a strictness of search, they had not calculated on. Young Edmunds was suspected with three companions. He was apprehended — committed — tried — condemned — to die.

"The wild and piercing shriek from a woman's voice, which resounded through the court when the solemn sentence was pronounced, rings in my ears at this moment. That cry struck a terror to the culprit's heart, which trial, condemnation — the approach of death itself, had failed to awaken. The lips which had been compressed in dogged sullenness throughout, quivered and parted involuntarily; the face turned ashy pale as the cold perspiration broke forth from every pore; the sturdy limbs of the felon trembled, and he staggered in the dock.

"In the first transports of her mental anguish, the suffering mother threw herself upon her knees at my feet, and fervently besought the Almighty Being who had hitherto supported her in all her troubles, to release her from a world of woe and misery, and to spare the life of her only child. A burst of grief, and a violent struggle, such as I hope I may never have to witness again, succeeded. I knew that her heart was breaking from that hour; but I never once heard complaint or murmur escape her lips.

"It was a piteous spectacle to see that woman in the prison-yard from day to day, eagerly and fervently attempting, by affection and entreaty, to soften the hard

heart of her obdurate son. It was in vain. He remained moody, obstinate, and unmoved. Not even the unlooked-for commutation of his sentence to transportation for fourteen years, softened for an instant the sullen hardihood of his demeanor.

"But, the spirit of resignation and endurance that had so long upheld her, was unable to contend against bodily weakness and infirmity. She fell sick. She dragged her tottering limbs from the bed to visit her son once more, but her strength failed her, and she sank powerless on the ground.

"And now, the boasted coldness and indifference of the young man were tested indeed; and the retribution that fell heavily upon him, nearly drove him mad. A day passed away and his mother was not there; another flew by, and she came not near him; a third evening arrived, and yet he had not seen her; and in four-and-twenty hours, he was to be separated from her — perhaps forever. Oh! how the long-forgotten thoughts of former days rushed upon his mind, as he almost ran up and down the narrow yard — as if intelligence would arrive the sooner for *his* hurrying — and how bitterly a sense of his helplessness and desolation rushed upon him, when he heard the truth! His mother, the only parent he had ever known, lay ill — it might be, dying — within one mile of the ground he stood on; were he free and unfettered, a few minutes would place him by her side. He rushed to the gate, and grasping the iron rails with the energy of desperation, shook it till it rang again, and threw himself against the thick wall as if to force a passage through the stone; but the strong building mocked his feeble efforts, and he beat his hands together and wept like a child.

"I bore the mother's forgiveness and blessing to her son in prison; and I carried his solemn assurance of repentance, and his fervent supplication for pardon, to her sick bed. I heard, with pity and compassion, the repentant man devise a thousand little plans for her comfort and support, when he returned; but I knew that many months before he could reach his place of destination, his mother would be no longer of this world.

"He was removed by night. A few weeks afterwards the poor woman's soul took its flight, I confidently hope, and solemnly believe, to a place of eternal happiness and rest. I performed the burial service over her remains. She lies in our little church-yard. There is no stone at her grave's head. Her sorrows were known to man; her virtues to God.

"It had been arranged previously to the convict's departure, that he should write to his mother so soon as he could obtain permission, and that the letter should be addressed to me. The father had positively refused to see his son from the moment of his apprehension; and it was a matter of indifference to him whether he lived or died. Many years passed over without any intelligence of him; and when more than half his term of transportation had expired, and I had received no letter, I concluded him to be dead, as, indeed, I almost hoped he might be.

"Edmunds, however, had been sent a considerable distance up the country on his arrival at the settlement; and to this circumstance, perhaps, may be attributed the fact, that though several letters were despatched, none of them ever reached my hands. He remained in the same place during the whole fourteen years. At the

expiration of the term, steadily adhering to his old resolution and the pledge he gave his mother, he made his way back to England amidst innumerable difficulties, and returned, on foot, to his native place.

"On a fine Sunday evening, in the month of August, John Edmunds set foot in the village he had left with shame and disgrace seventeen years before. His nearest way lay through the church-yard. The man's heart swelled as he crossed the stile. The tall old elms, through whose branches the declining sun cast here and there a rich ray of light upon the shady path, awakened the associations of his earliest days. He pictured himself as he was then, clinging to his mother's hand, and walking peacefully to church. He remembered how he used to look up into her pale face; and how her eyes would sometimes fill with tears as she gazed upon his features — tears which fell hot upon his forehead as she stooped to kiss him, and made him weep too, although he little knew then what bitter tears hers were. He thought how often he had run merrily down that path with some childish playfellow, looking back, ever and again, to catch his mother's smile, or hear her gentle voice; and then a veil seemed lifted from his memory, and words of kindness unrequited, and warnings despised, and promises broken, thronged upon his recollection till his heart failed him, and he could bear it no longer.

"He entered the church. The evening service was concluded, and the congregation had dispersed, but it was not yet closed. His steps echoed through the low building with a hollow sound, and he almost feared to be alone, it was so still and quiet. He looked round him. Nothing was changed. The place seemed smaller

than it used to be, but there were the old monuments on which he had gazed with childish awe a thousand times; the little pulpit with its faded cushion; the Communion-table before which he had so often repeated the Commandments he had reverenced as a child, and forgotten as a man. He approached the old seat; it looked cold and desolate. The cushion had been removed, and the Bible was not there. Perhaps his mother now occupied a poorer seat, or possibly she had grown infirm and could not reach the church alone. He dared not think of what he feared. A cold feeling crept over him, and he trembled violently as he turned away.

"An old man entered the porch just as he reached it. Edmunds started back, for he knew him well; many a time he had watched him digging graves in the churchyard. What would *he* say to the returned convict?

"The old man raised his eyes to the stranger's face, bid him 'Good-evening,' and walked slowly on. He had forgotten him.

"He walked down the hill, and through the village. The weather was warm, and the people were sitting at their doors, or strolling in their little gardens, as he passed, enjoying the serenity of the evening, and their rest from labor. Many a look was turned towards him, and many a doubtful glance he cast on either side, to see whether any knew and shunned him. There were strange faces in almost every house; in some he recognized the burly form of some old school-fellow — a boy when he last saw him — surrounded by a troop of merry children; in others he saw, seated in an easy-chair at a cottage-door, a feeble and infirm old man, whom he only remembered as a hale and hearty laborer; but they had all forgotten him, and he passed on unknown.

"The last soft light of the setting sun had fallen on the earth, casting a rich glow on the yellow corn sheaves, and lengthening the shadows of the orchard trees, as he stood before the old house — the home of his infancy — to which his heart had yearned with an intensity of affection not to be described, through long and weary years of captivity and sorrow. The paling was low, though he well remembered the time when it had seemed a high wall to him: and he looked over into the old garden. There were more seeds and gayer flowers than there used to be, but there were the old trees still — the very tree under which he had lain a thousand times when tired of playing in the sun, and felt the soft mild sleep of happy boyhood steal gently upon him. There were voices within the house. He listened, but they fell strangely upon his ear; he knew them not. They were merry too; and he well knew that his poor old mother could not be cheerful, and he away. The door opened, and a group of little children bounded out, shouting and romping. The father, with a little boy in his arms, appeared at the door, and they crowded round him, clapping their tiny hands, and dragging him out, to join their joyous sports. The convict thought on the many times he had shrunk from his father's sight in that very place. He remembered how often he had buried his trembling head beneath the bed-clothes, and heard the harsh word, and the hard stripe, and his mother's wailing; and though the man sobbed aloud with agony of mind as he left the spot, his fist was clenched, and his teeth were set, in fierce and deadly passion.

"And such was the return to which he had looked through the weary perspective of many years, and for

which he had undergone so much suffering! No face of welcome, no look of forgiveness, no house to receive, no hand to help him — and this, too, in the old village. What was his loneliness in the wild thick woods, where man was never seen, to this!

"He felt that in the distant land of his bondage and infamy, he had thought of his native place as it was when he left it; not as it would be, when he returned. The sad reality struck coldly at his heart, and his spirits sank within him. He had not courage to make inquiries, or to present himself to the only person who was likely to receive him with kindness and compassion. He walked slowly on; and shunning the road-side, like a guilty man, turned into a meadow he well remembered; and, covering his face with his hands, threw himself upon the grass.

"He had not observed that a man was lying on the bank beside him; his garments rustled as he turned round to steal a look at the new-comer; and Edmunds raised his head.

"The man had moved into a sitting posture. His body was much bent, and his face was wrinkled and yellow. His dress denoted him an inmate of the workhouse: he had the appearance of being very old, but it looked more the effect of dissipation or disease, than length of years. He was staring hard at the stranger, and though his eyes were lustreless and heavy at first, they appeared to glow with an unnatural and alarmed expression after they had been fixed upon him for a short time, until they seemed to be starting from their sockets. Edmunds gradually raised himself to his knees, and looked more and more earnestly upon the old man's face. They gazed upon each other in silence.

"The old man was ghastly pale. He shuddered and tottered to his feet. Edmunds sprang to his. He stepped back a pace or two. Edmunds advanced.

"'Let me hear you speak,' said the convict in a thick broken voice.

"'Stand off!' cried the old man, with a dreadful oath. The convict drew closer to him.

"'Stand off!' shrieked the old man. Furious with terror he raised his stick, and struck Edmunds a heavy blow across the face.

"'Father — devil!' murmured the convict, between his set teeth. He rushed wildly forward, and clenched the old man by the throat — but he was his father; and his arm fell powerless by his side.

"The old man uttered a loud yell which rang through the lonely fields like the howl of an evil spirit. His face turned black: the gore rushed from his mouth and nose, and dyed the grass a deep dark red, as he staggered and fell. He had ruptured a blood-vessel; and he was a dead man before his son could raise him.

* * * * * *

"In that corner of the church-yard," said the old gentleman, after a silence of a few minutes, "in that corner of the church-yard of which I have before spoken, there lies buried a man, who was in my employment for three years after this event: and who was truly contrite, penitent, and humbled, if ever man was. No one save myself knew in that man's lifetime who he was or whence he came: — it was John Edmunds the returned convict."

CHAPTER VII.

HOW MR. WINKLE, INSTEAD OF SHOOTING AT THE PIGEON AND KILLING THE CROW, SHOT AT THE CROW AND WOUNDED THE PIGEON; HOW THE DINGLEY DELL CRICKET CLUB, PLAYED ALL MUGGLETON, AND HOW ALL MUGGLETON DINED AT THE DINGLEY DELL EXPENSE: WITH OTHER INTERESTING AND INSTRUCTIVE MATTERS.

THE fatiguing adventures of the day or the somniferous influence of the clergyman's tale, operated so strongly on the drowsy tendencies of Mr. Pickwick, that in less than five minutes after he had been shown to his comfortable bedroom, he fell into a sound and dreamless sleep, from which he was only awakened by the morning sun darting his bright beams reproachfully into the apartment. Mr. Pickwick was no sluggard; and he sprang like an ardent warrior from his tent — bedstead.

"Pleasant, pleasant country," sighed the enthusiastic gentleman, as he opened his lattice window. "Who could live to gaze from day to day on bricks and slates, who had once felt the influence of a scene like this? Who could continue to exist, where there are no cows but the cows on the chimney-pots; nothing redolent of Pan but pan-tiles; no crop but stone crop? Who could

bear to drag out a life in such a spot? Who I ask could endure it?" and, having cross-examined solitude after the most approved precedents, at considerable length, Mr. Pickwick thrust his head out of the lattice, and looked around him.

The rich, sweet smell of the hay-ricks rose to his chamber-window; the hundred perfumes of the little flower-garden beneath, scented the air around; the deep-green meadows shone in the morning dew that glistened on every leaf as it trembled in the gentle air; and the birds sung as if every sparkling drop were a fountain of inspiration to them. Mr. Pickwick fell into an enchanting, and delicious revery.

"Hallo!" was the sound that roused him.

He looked to the right but he saw nobody; his eyes wandered to the left, and pierced the prospect; he stared into the sky, but he wasn't wanted there; and then he did what a common mind would have done at once — looked into the garden, and there saw Mr. Wardle.

"How are you?" said that good-humored individual, out of breath with his own anticipations of pleasure. "Beautiful morning, a'n't it? Glad to see you up so early. Make haste down, and come out. I'll wait for you here."

Mr. Pickwick needed no second invitation. Ten minutes sufficed for the completion of his toilet, and at the expiration of that time he was by the old gentleman's side.

"Hallo!" said Mr. Pickwick in his turn: seeing that his companion was armed with a gun, and that another lay ready on the grass. "What's going forward?"

"Why, your friend and I," replied the host, "are go-

ing out rook-shooting before breakfast. He's a very good shot, a'n't he?"

"I've heard him say he's a capital one," replied Mr. Pickwick; "but I never saw him aim at anything."

"Well," said the host, "I wish he'd come. Joe — Joe!"

The fat boy, who under the exciting influence of the morning did not appear to be more than three parts and a fraction asleep, emerged from the house.

"Go up, and call the gentleman, and tell him he'll find me and Mr. Pickwick in the rookery. Show the gentleman the way there; d'ye hear?"

The boy departed to execute his commission; and the host, carrying both guns like a second Robinson Crusoe led the way from the garden.

"This is the place," said the old gentleman, pausing after a few minutes' walking, in an avenue of trees. The information was unnecessary; for the incessant cawing of the unconscious rooks, sufficiently indicated their whereabout.

The old gentleman laid one gun on the ground and loaded the other.

"Here they are," said Mr. Pickwick; and as he spoke, the forms of Mr. Tupman, Mr. Snodgrass, and Mr. Winkle appeared in the distance. The fat boy, not being quite certain which gentleman he was directed to call, had with peculiar sagacity, and to prevent the possibility of any mistake, called them all.

"Come along," shouted the old gentleman, addressing Mr. Winkle; "a keen hand like you ought to have been up long ago, even to such poor work as this."

Mr. Winkle responded with a forced smile, and took up the spare gun with an expression of countenance

which a metaphysical rook, impressed with a foreboding of his approaching death by violence, may be supposed to assume. It might have been keenness, but it looked remarkably like misery.

The old gentleman nodded; and two ragged boys who had been marshalled to the spot under the direction of the infant Lambert, forthwith commenced climbing up two of the trees.

"What are those lads for?" inquired Mr. Pickwick abruptly. He was rather alarmed; for he was not quite certain but that the distress of the agricultural interest, about which he had often heard a great deal, might have compelled the small boys attached to the soil, to earn a precarious and hazardous subsistence by making marks of themselves for inexperienced sportsmen.

"Only to start the game," replied Mr. Wardle, laughing.

"To what?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"Why, in plain English, to frighten the rooks."

"Oh! Is that all?"

"You are satisfied?"

"Quite."

"Very well. Shall I begin?"

"If you please," said Mr. Winkle, glad of any respite.

"Stand aside, then. Now for it."

The boy shouted, and shook a branch with a nest on it. Half a dozen young rooks in violent conversation, flew out to ask what the matter was. The old gentleman fired by way of reply. Down fell one bird, and off flew the others.

"Take him up, Joe," said the old gentleman.

There was a smile upon the youth's face as he advanced. Indistinct visions of rook-pie floated through his imagination. He laughed as he retired with the bird — it was a plump one.

"Now, Mr. Winkle," said the host, reloading his own gun. "Fire away."

Mr. Winkle advanced, and levelled his gun. Mr. Pickwick and his friends cowered involuntarily to escape damage from the heavy fall of rooks, which they felt quite certain would be occasioned by the devastating barrel of their friend. There was a solemn pause — a shout — a flapping of wings — a faint click.

"Hallo!" said the old gentleman.

"Won't it go?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"Missed fire," said Mr. Winkle, who was very pale: probably from disappointment.

"Odd," said the old gentleman, taking the gun. "Never knew one of them miss fire before. Why, I don't see anything of the cap."

"Bless my soul," said Mr. Winkle. "I declare I forgot the cap!"

The slight omission was rectified. Mr. Pickwick crouched again. Mr. Winkle stepped forward with an air of determination and resolution; and Mr. Tupman looked out from behind a tree. The boy shouted; — four birds flew out. Mr. Winkle fired. There was a scream as of an individual — not a rook — in corporeal anguish. Mr. Tupman had saved the lives of innumerable unoffending birds by receiving a portion of the charge in his left arm.

To describe the confusion that ensued would be impossible. To tell how Mr. Pickwick in the first transports of his emotion called Mr. Winkle "Wretch!" how

Mr. Tupman lay prostrate on the ground; and how Mr. Winkle knelt horror-stricken beside him; how Mr. Tupman called distractedly upon some feminine Christian name, and then opened first one eye, and then the other, and then fell back and shut them both; — all this would be as difficult to describe in detail, as it would be to depict the gradual recovering of the unfortunate individual, the binding up of his arm with pocket-handkerchiefs, and the conveying him back by slow degrees supported by the arms of his anxious friends.

They drew near the house. The ladies were at the garden-gate, waiting for their arrival and their breakfast. The spinster aunt appeared; she smiled, and beckoned them to walk quicker. 'Twas evident she knew not of the disaster. Poor thing! There are times when ignorance is bliss indeed.

They approached nearer.

"Why, what *is* the matter with the little old gentleman?" said Isabella Wardle. The spinster aunt heeded not the remark; she thought it applied to Mr. Pickwick. In her eyes Tracy Tupman was a youth; she viewed his years through a diminishing glass.

"Don't be frightened," called out the old host, fearful of alarming his daughters. The little party had crowded so completely round Mr. Tupman, that they could not yet clearly discern the nature of the accident.

"Don't be frightened," said the host.

"What's the matter?" screamed the ladies.

"Mr. Tupman has met with a little accident; that's all."

The spinster aunt uttered a piercing scream, burst into an hysteric laugh, and fell backwards in the arms of her nieces.

"Throw some cold water over her," said the old gentleman.

"No, no," murmured the spinster aunt; "I am better now. Bella, Emily — a surgeon! Is he wounded? — Is he dead? — Is he —— ha, ha, ha!" Here the spinster aunt burst into a fit number two, of hysteric laughter, interspersed with screams.

"Calm yourself," said Mr. Tupman, affected almost to tears by this expression of sympathy with his sufferings. "Dear, dear madam, calm yourself."

"It is his voice!" exclaimed the spinster aunt; and strong symptoms of fit number three developed themselves forthwith.

"Do not agitate yourself I entreat you, dearest madam," said Mr. Tupman, soothingly, "I am very little hurt, I assure you."

"Then you are not dead!" ejaculated the hysterical lady. "Oh, say you are not dead!"

"Don't be a fool, Rachael," interposed Mr. Wardle, rather more roughly than was quite consistent with the poetic nature of the scene. "What the devil's the use of his *saying* he isn't dead?"

"No, no, I am not," said Mr. Tupman. "I require no assistance but yours. Let me lean on your arm." He added, in a whisper, "Oh Miss Rachael!" The agitated female advanced, and offered her arm. They turned into the breakfast parlor. Mr. Tracy Tupman gently pressed her hand to his lips, and sank upon the sofa.

"Are you faint?" inquired the anxious Rachael.

"No," said Mr. Tupman. "It is nothing. I shall be better presently." He closed his eyes.

"He sleeps," murmured the spinster aunt. (His

organs of vision had been closed nearly twenty seconds.) "Dear — dear — Mr. Tupman!"

Mr. Tupman jumped up — "Oh, say those words again!" he exclaimed.

The lady started. "Surely you did not hear them!" she said, bashfully.

"Oh yes I did!" replied Mr. Tupman; "repeat them. If you would have me recover, repeat them."

"Hush!" said the lady. "My brother."

Mr. Tracy Tupman resumed his former position; and Mr. Wardle accompanied by a surgeon entered the room.

The arm was examined, the wound dressed, and pronounced to be a very slight one; and the minds of the company having been thus satisfied, they proceeded to satisfy their appetites with countenances to which an expression of cheerfulness was again restored. Mr. Pickwick alone was silent and reserved. Doubt and distrust were exhibited in his countenance. His confidence in Mr. Winkle had been shaken — greatly shaken — by the proceedings of the morning.

"Are you a cricketer?" inquired Mr. Wardle of the marksman.

At any other time, Mr. Winkle would have replied in the affirmative. He felt the delicacy of his situation, and modestly replied, "No."

"Are you, sir?" inquired Mr. Snodgrass.

"I was once upon a time," replied the host; "but I have given it up now. I subscribe to the club here, but I don't play."

"The grand match is played to-day, I believe," said Mr. Pickwick.

"It is," replied the host. "Of course you would like to see it."

"I, sir," replied Mr. Pickwick, "am delighted to view any sports which may be safely indulged in, and in which the impotent effects of unskilful people do not endanger human life." Mr. Pickwick paused, and looked steadily on Mr. Winkle, who quailed beneath his leader's searching glance. The great man withdrew his eyes after a few minutes, and added: "Shall we be justified in leaving our wounded friend to the care of the ladies?"

"You cannot leave me in better hands," said Mr. Tupman.

"Quite impossible," said Mr. Snodgrass.

It was therefore settled that Mr. Tupman should be left at home in charge of the females; and that the remainder of the guests under the guidance of Mr. Wardle should proceed to the spot, where was to be held that trial of skill which had roused all Muggleton from its torpor, and inoculated Dingley Dell with a fever of excitement.

As their walk, which was not above two miles long, lay through shady lanes, and sequestered foot-paths; and as their conversation turned upon the delightful scenery by which they were on every side surrounded, Mr. Pickwick was almost inclined to regret the expedition they had used, when he found himself in the main street of the town of Muggleton.

Everybody whose genius has a topographical bent, knows perfectly well, that Muggleton is a corporate town, with a mayor, burgesses, and freemen; and anybody who has consulted the addresses of the mayor to the freemen, or the freemen to the mayor, or both to the corporation, or all three to Parliament, will learn from thence what they ought to have known before, that Muggleton is an ancient and loyal borough, mingling a

zealous advocacy of Christian principles with a devoted attachment to commercial rights; in demonstration whereof, the mayor, corporation, and other inhabitants, have presented at divers times, no fewer than one thousand four hundred and twenty petitions, against the continuance of negro slavery abroad, and an equal number against any interference with the factory system at home; sixty-eight in favor of the sale of livings in the church, and eighty-six for abolishing Sunday trading in the streets.

Mr. Pickwick stood in the principal street of this illustrious town, and gazed with an air of curiosity not unmixed with interest, on the objects around him. There was an open square for the market-place; and in the centre of it, a large inn with a sign-post in front, displaying an object very common in art, but rarely met with in nature — to wit, a blue lion with three bow legs in the air, balancing himself on the extreme point of the centre claw of his fourth foot. There were, within sight, an auctioneer's and fire-agency office, a corn-factor's, a linen-draper's, a saddler's, a distiller's, a grocer's, and a shoe-shop — the last-mentioned warehouse being also appropriated to the diffusion of hats, bonnets, wearing apparel, cotton umbrellas, and useful knowledge. There was a red-brick house with a small paved court-yard in front, which anybody might have known belonged to the attorney: and there was, moreover, another red-brick house with Venetian blinds, and a large brass door-plate, with a very legible announcement that it belonged to the surgeon. A few boys were making their way to the cricket-field; and two or three shopkeepers who were standing at their doors, looked as if they should like to be making their way to the same spot, as indeed to all

appearance they might have done, without losing any great amount of custom thereby. Mr. Pickwick having paused to make these observations, to be noted down at a more convenient period, hastened to rejoin his friends, who had turned out of the main street, and were already within sight of the field of battle.

The wickets were pitched, and so were a couple of marquees for the rest and refreshment of the contending parties. The game had not yet commenced. Two or three Dingley Dellers, and All-Muggletonians, were amusing themselves with a majestic air by throwing the ball carelessly from hand to hand; and several other gentlemen dressed like them, in straw hats, flannel jackets, and white trousers, — a costume in which they looked very much like amateur stone-masons — were sprinkled about the tents, towards one of which Mr. Wardle conducted the party.

Several dozen of "How-are-you's?" hailed the old gentleman's arrival; and a general raising of the straw hats, and bending forward of the flannel jackets, followed his introduction of his guests as gentlemen from London, who were extremely anxious to witness the proceedings of the day, with which, he had no doubt, they would be greatly delighted.

"You had better step into the marquee, I think, sir," said one very stout gentleman, whose body and legs looked like half a gigantic roll of flannel, elevated on a couple of inflated pillow-cases.

"You'll find it much pleasanter, sir," urged another stout gentleman, who strongly resembled the other half of the roll of flannel aforesaid.

"You're very good," said Mr. Pickwick.

"This way," said the first speaker; "they notch in

here — it's the best place in the whole field;" and the cricketer, panting on before, preceded them to the tent.

"Capital game — smart sport — fine exercise — very," were the words which fell upon Mr. Pickwick's ear as he entered the tent; and the first object that met his eyes, was his green-coated friend of the Rochester coach, holding forth, to the no small delight and edification of a select circle of the chosen of All-Muggleton. His dress was slightly improved, and he wore boots; but there was no mistaking him.

The stranger recognized his friends immediately: and, darting forward and seizing Mr. Pickwick by the hand, dragged him to a seat, with his usual impetuosity, talking all the while as if the whole of the arrangements were under his especial patronage and direction.

"This way — this way — capital fun — lots of beer — hogsheads; rounds of beef — bullocks; mustard — cart-loads; glorious day — down with you — make yourself at home — glad to see you — very."

Mr. Pickwick sat down as he was bid, and Mr. Winkle and Mr. Snodgrass also complied with the directions of their mysterious friend. Mr. Wardle looked on, in silent wonder.

"Mr. Wardle — a friend of mine," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Friend of yours! — My dear sir, how are you? — Friend of *my* friend's — give me your hand, sir" — and the stranger grasped Mr. Wardle's hand with all the fervor of a close intimacy of many years, and then stepped back a pace or two as if to take a full survey of his face and figure, and then shook hands with him again, if possible, more warmly than before.

"Well; and how came you here?" said Mr. Pickwick, with a smile in which benevolence struggled with surprise.

"Come," replied the stranger — "stopping at Crown — Crown at Muggleton — met a party — flannel jackets — white trousers — anchovy sandwiches — devilled kidneys — splendid fellows — glorious."

Mr. Pickwick was sufficiently versed in the stranger's system of stenography to infer from this rapid and disjointed communication that he had, somehow or other, contracted an acquaintance with the All-Muggletons, which he had converted, by a process peculiar to himself, into that extent of good fellowship on which a general invitation may be easily founded. His curiosity was therefore satisfied, and putting on his spectacles, he prepared himself to watch the play which was just commencing.

All-Muggleton had the first innings; and the interest became intense when Mr. Dumkins and Mr. Podder, two of the most renowned members of that most distinguished club, walked, bat in hand, to their respective wickets. Mr. Luffey, the highest ornament of Dingley Dell, was pitched to bowl against the redoubtable Dumkins, and Mr. Struggles was selected to do the same kind office for the hitherto unconquered Podder. Several players were stationed to "look out," in different parts of the field, and each fixed himself into the proper attitude by placing one hand on each knee, and stooping very much as if he were "making a back" for some beginner at leap-frog. All the regular players do this sort of thing; — indeed it's generally supposed that it is quite impossible to look out properly in any other position.

The umpires were stationed behind the wickets; the scorers were prepared to notch the runs; a breathless silence ensued. Mr. Luffey retired a few paces behind the wicket of the passive Podder, and applied the ball to his right eye for several seconds. Dumkins confidently awaited its coming, with his eyes fixed on the motions of Luffey.

"Play," suddenly cried the bowler. The ball flew from his hand straight and swift towards the centre stump of the wicket. The wary Dumkins was on the alert; it fell upon the tip of the bat, and bounded far away over the heads of the scouts, who had just stooped low enough to let it fly over them.

"Run — run — another. — Now, then, throw her up — up with her — stop there — another — no — yes — no — throw her up, throw her up!" — Such were the shouts which followed the stroke; and, at the conclusion of which All-Muggleton had scored two. Nor was Podder behindhand in earning laurels wherewith to garnish himself and Muggleton. He blocked the doubtful balls, missed the bad ones, took the good ones, and sent them flying to all parts of the field. The scouts were hot and tired; the bowlers were changed and bowled till their arms ached; but Dumkins and Podder remained unconquered. Did an elderly gentleman essay to stop the progress of the ball, it rolled between his legs, or slipped between his fingers. Did a slim gentleman try to catch it, it struck him on the nose, and bounded pleasantly off with redoubled violence, while the slim gentleman's eyes filled with water, and his form writhed with anguish. Was it thrown straight up to the wicket, Dumkins had reached it before the ball. In short, when Dumkins was caught out, and Podder stumped out, All-Muggleton

had notched some fifty-four, while the score of the Dingley-Dellers was as blank as their faces. The advantage was too great to be recovered. In vain did the eager Luffey, and the enthusiastic Struggles, do all that skill and experience could suggest, to regain the ground Dingley Dell had lost in the contest; — it was of no avail; and in an early period of the winning game Dingley Dell gave in, and allowed the superior prowess of All-Muggleton.

The stranger, meanwhile, had been eating, drinking, and talking, without cessation. At every good stroke he expressed his satisfaction and approval of the player in a most condescending and patronizing manner, which could not fail to have been highly gratifying to the party concerned; while at every bad attempt at a catch, and every failure to stop the ball, he launched his personal displeasure at the head of the devoted individual in such denunciations as — "Ah, ah! — stupid" — "Now butter-fingers" — "Muff" — "Humbug" — and so forth — ejaculations which seemed to establish him in the opinion of all around, as a most excellent and undeniable judge of the whole art and mystery of the noble game of cricket.

"Capital game — well played — some strokes admirable," said the stranger as both sides crowded into the tent, at the conclusion of the game.

"You have played it, sir?" inquired Mr. Wardle, who had been much amused by his loquacity.

"Played it! Think I have — thousands of times — not here — West Indies — exciting thing — hot work — very."

"It must be rather a warm pursuit in such a climate," observed Mr. Pickwick.

"Warm! — red-hot — scorching — glowing. Played a match once — single wicket — friend the Colonel — Sir Thomas Blazo — who should get the greatest number of runs. — Won the toss — first innings — seven o'clock, A.M. — six natives to look out — went in; kept in — heat intense — natives all fainted — taken away — fresh half-dozen ordered — fainted also — Blazo bowling — supported by two natives — couldn't bowl me out — fainted too — cleared away the Colonel — wouldn't give in — faithful attendant — Quanko Samba — last man left — sun so hot, bat in blisters, ball scorched brown — five hundred and seventy runs — rather exhausted — Quanko mustered up last remaining strength — bowled me out — had a bath, and went out to dinner."

"And what became of what's-his-name, sir?" inquired an old gentleman.

"Blazo?"

"No — the other gentleman."

"Quanko Samba?"

"Yes sir."

"Poor Quanko — never recovered it — bowled on, on my account — bowled off, on his own — died sir." Here the stranger buried his countenance in a brown jug, but whether to hide his emotion or imbibe its contents, we cannot distinctly affirm. We only know that he paused suddenly, drew a long and deep breath, and looked anxiously on, as two of the principal members of the Dingley Dell club approached Mr. Pickwick, and said —

"We are about to partake of a plain dinner at the Blue Lion, sir; we hope you and your friends will join us."

"Of course," said Mr. Wardle, "among our friends

we include Mr. ——;" and he looked towards the stranger.

"Jingle," said that versatile gentleman, taking the hint at once. "Jingle — Alfred Jingle, Esq., of No Hall, Nowhere."

"I shall be very happy, I am sure," said Mr. Pickwick.

"So shall I," said Mr. Alfred Jingle, drawing one arm through Mr. Pickwick's, and another through Mr. Wardle's, as he whispered confidentially in the ear of the former gentleman: —

"Devilish good dinner — cold, but capital — peeped into the room this morning — fowls and pies, and all that sort of thing — pleasant fellows these — well behaved, too — very."

There being no further preliminaries to arrange, the company straggled into the town in little knots of twos and threes; and within a quarter of an hour were all seated in the great room of the Blue Lion Inn, Muggleton — Mr. Dumkins acting as chairman, and Mr. Luffey officiating as vice.

There was a vast deal of talking and rattling of knives and forks, and plates: a great running about of three ponderous headed waiters, and a rapid disappearance of the substantial viands on the table; to each and every of which item of confusion, the facetious Mr. Jingle lent the aid of half-a-dozen ordinary men at least. When everybody had eaten as much as possible, the cloth was removed, bottles, glasses, and dessert were placed on the table; and the waiters withdrew to "clear away," or in other words, to appropriate to their own private use and emolument, whatever remnants of the eatables and drinkables they could contrive to lay their hands on.

Amidst the general hum of mirth and conversation that ensued, there was a little man with a puffy Say-nothing-to-me,-or-I'll-contradict-you sort of countenance, who remained very quiet; occasionally looking round him when the conversation slackened, as if he contemplated putting in something very weighty: and now and then bursting into a short cough of inexpressible grandeur. At length, during a moment of comparative silence, the little man called out in a very loud, solemn voice,

"Mr. Luffey!"

Everybody was hushed into a profound stillness as the individual addressed, replied,

"Sir!"

"I wish to address a few words to you sir, if you will entreat the gentlemen to fill up their glasses."

Mr. Jingle uttered a patronizing "hear, hear," which was responded to, by the remainder of the company: and the glasses having been filled the Vice-President assumed an air of wisdom in a state of profound attention; and said,

"Mr. Staple."

"Sir," said the little man, rising, "I wish to address what I have to say to *you* and not to our worthy chairman, because our worthy chairman is in some measure — I may say in a great degree — the subject of what I have to say, or I may say to — to —"

"State," suggested Mr. Jingle.

— "Yes, to state," said the little man, "I thank my honorable friend, if he will allow me to call him so — (four hears, and one certainly from Mr. Jingle) — for the suggestion. Sir, I am a Deller — a Dingley Deller, (cheers). I cannot lay claim to the honor of forming an

item in the population of Muggleton; nor sir, I will frankly admit, do I covet that honor: and I will tell you why sir, (hear); to Muggleton I will readily concede all those honors and distinctions to which it can fairly lay claim — they are too numerous and too well known to require aid or recapitulation from me. But sir, while we remember that Muggleton has given birth to a Dumkins and a Podder, let us never forget that Dingley Dell can boast a Luffey and a Struggles. (Vociferous cheering.) Let me not be considered as wishing to detract from the merits of the former gentlemen. Sir, I envy them the luxury of their own feelings, on this occasion. (Cheers.) Every gentleman who hears me, is probably acquainted with the reply made by an individual, who — to use an ordinary figure of speech — 'hung out' in a tub, to the emperor Alexander: — 'If I were not Diogenes,' said he, 'I would be Alexander.' I can well imagine these gentlemen to say, 'If I were not Dumkins I would be Luffey; if I were not Podder I would be Struggles.' (Enthusiasm.) But gentlemen of Muggleton is it in cricket alone that your fellow-townsmen stand preëminent? Have you never heard of Dumkins and determination? Have you never been taught to associate Podder with property? (Great applause.) Have you never, when struggling for your rights, your liberties, and your privileges, been reduced, if only for an instant, to misgiving and despair? And when you have been thus depressed, has not the name of Dumkins laid afresh within your breast, the fire which had just gone out; and has not a word from that man, lighted it again as brightly as if it had never expired? (Great cheering.) Gentlemen, I beg you to surround with a rich halo of enthusiastic cheering, the united names of Dumkins and Podder.'"

Here the little man ceased, and here the company commenced a raising of voices, and thumping of tables, which lasted with little intermission during the remainder of the evening. Other toasts were drank. Mr. Luffey and Mr. Struggles, Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Jingle, were, each in his turn, the subject of unqualified eulogium; and each in due course returned thanks for the honor.

Enthusiastic as we are in the noble cause to which we have devoted ourselves, we should have felt a sensation of pride which we cannot express, and a consciousness of having done something to merit immortality of which we are now deprived, could we have laid the faintest outline of these addresses before our ardent readers. Mr. Snodgrass, as usual, took a great mass of notes, which would no doubt have afforded most useful and valuable information, had not the burning eloquence of the words or the feverish influence of the wine made that gentleman's hand so extremely unsteady, as to render his writing nearly unintelligible, and his style wholly so. By dint of patient investigation, we have been enabled to trace some characters bearing a faint resemblance to the names of the speakers: and we can also discern an entry of a song (supposed to have been sung by Mr. Jingle), in which the words "bowl" "sparkling" "ruby" "bright," and "wine" are frequently repeated at short intervals. We fancy too, that we can discern at the very end of the notes, some indistinct reference to "broiled bones;" and then the words "cold" "without" occur: but as any hypothesis we could found upon them must necessarily rest upon mere conjecture, we are not disposed to indulge in any of the speculations to which they may give rise.

We will therefore return to Mr. Tupman; merely

adding that within some few minutes before twelve o'clock that night, the convocation of worthies of Dingley Dell and Muggleton, were heard to sing with great feeling and emphasis, the beautiful and pathetic national air, of

We won't go home till morning,
We won't go home till morning,
We won't go home till morning,
'Till daylight doth appear.

CHAPTER VIII.

STRONGLY ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE POSITION, THAT THE COURSE OF TRUE LOVE IS NOT A RAILWAY.

The quiet seclusion of Dingley Dell, the presence of so many of the gentler sex, and the solicitude and anxiety they evinced in his behalf, were all favorable to the growth and development of those softer feelings which nature had implanted deep in the bosom of Mr. Tracy Tupman, and which now appeared destined to centre in one lovely object. The young ladies were pretty, their manners winning, their dispositions unexceptionable; but there was a dignity in the air, a touch-me-not-ishness in the walk, a majesty in the eye of the spinster aunt, to which, at their time of life they could lay no claim, which distinguished her from any female on whom Mr. Tupman had ever gazed. That there was something kindred in their nature, something congenial in their souls, something mysteriously sympathetic in their bosoms, was evident. Her name was the first that rose to Mr. Tupman's lips as he lay wounded on the grass; and her hysteric laughter, was the first sound that fell upon his ear, when he was supported to the house. But had her agitation arisen from an amiable and feminine sensibility which would have been equally irrepressible in any case; or had it been called forth

by a more ardent and passionate feeling, which he, of all men living, could alone awaken? These were the doubts which racked his brain as he lay extended on the sofa: these were the doubts which he determined should be at once and forever resolved.

It was evening. Isabella and Emily had strolled out with Mr. Trundle; the deaf old lady had fallen asleep in her chair; the snoring of the fat boy, penetrated in a low and monotonous sound from the distant kitchen; the buxom servants were lounging at the side-door, enjoying the pleasantness of the hour, and the delights of a flirtation, on first principles, with certain unwieldy animals attached to the farm; and there sat the interesting pair, uncared for by all, caring for none, and dreaming only of themselves: there they sat, in short, like a pair of carefully-folded kid-gloves — bound up in each other.

"I have forgotten my flowers," said the spinster aunt.

"Water them now," said Mr. Tupman in accents of persuasion.

"You will take cold in the evening air," urged the spinster aunt, affectionately.

"No, no," said Mr. Tupman, rising; "it will do me good. Let me accompany you."

The lady paused to adjust the sling in which the left arm of the youth was placed, and taking his right arm led him to the garden.

There was a bower at the further end, with honeysuckle, jessamine, and creeping plants — one of those sweet retreats, which humane men erect for the accommodation of spiders.

The spinster aunt took up a large watering-pot which lay in one corner, and was about to leave the arbor

Mr. Tupman detained her, and drew her to a seat beside him.

"Miss Wardle!" said he.

The spinster aunt trembled, till some pebbles which had accidentally found their way into the large watering-pot, shook like an infant's rattle.

"Miss Wardle," said Mr. Tupman, "you are an angel."

"Mr. Tupman!" exclaimed Rachael, blushing as red as the watering-pot itself.

"Nay," said the eloquent Pickwickian — "I know it but too well."

"All women are angels, they say," murmured the lady, playfully.

"Then what can *you* be; or to what, without presumption, can I compare you?" replied Mr. Tupman. "Where was the woman ever seen, who resembled you? Where else could I hope to find so rare a combination of excellence and beauty? Where else could I seek to — Oh!" Here Mr. Tupman paused, and pressed the hand which clasped the handle of the happy watering-pot.

The lady turned aside her head. "Men are such deceivers," she softly whispered.

"They are, they are," ejaculated Mr. Tupman; "but not all men. There lives at least one being who can never change — one being who would be content to devote his whole existence to your happiness — who lives but in your eyes — who breathes but in your smiles — who bears the heavy burden of life itself, only for you."

"Could such an individual be found," said the lady ——

"But he *can* be found," said the ardent Mr. Tupman,

interposing. "He *is* found. He is here Miss Wardle." And ere the lady was aware of his intention, Mr. Tupman had sunk upon his knees at her feet.

"Mr. Tupman, rise," said Rachael.

"Never!" was the valorous reply. "Oh, Rachael!" — He seized her passive hand, and the watering-pot fell to the ground as he pressed it to his lips. — "Oh, Rachael! say you love me."

"Mr. Tupman," said the spinster aunt, with averted head — "I can hardly speak the words; but — but — you are not wholly indifferent to me."

Mr. Tupman no sooner heard this avowal, than he proceeded to do what his enthusiastic emotions prompted, and what, for aught we know, (for we are but little acquainted with such matters,) people so circumstanced always do. He jumped up, and, throwing his arm round the neck of the spinster aunt, imprinted upon her lips numerous kisses, which after a due show of struggling and resistance, she received so passively, that there is no telling how many more Mr. Tupman might have bestowed, if the lady had not given a very unaffected start and exclaimed in an affrighted tone, —

"Mr. Tupman, we are observed! — we are discovered!"

Mr. Tupman looked round. There was the fat boy, perfectly motionless, with his large circular eyes staring into the arbor, but without the slightest expression on his face that the most expert physiognomist could have referred to astonishment, curiosity, or any other known passion that agitates the human breast. Mr. Tupman gazed on the fat boy, and the fat boy stared at him; and the longer Mr. Tupman observed the utter vacancy of the fat boy's countenance, the more convinced he be-

came that he either did not know, or did not understand, anything that had been going forward. Under this impression, he said with great firmness, —

"What do you want here, sir?"

"Supper's ready, sir," was the prompt reply.

"Have you just come here, sir?" inquired Mr. Tupman, with a piercing look.

"Just," replied the fat boy.

Mr. Tupman looked at him very hard again; but there was not a wink in his eye, or a curve in his face.

Mr. Tupman took the arm of the spinster aunt, and walked towards the house; the fat boy followed behind.

"He knows nothing of what has happened," he whispered.

"Nothing," said the spinster aunt.

There was a sound behind them, as of an imperfectly suppressed chuckle. Mr. Tupman turned sharply round. No; it could not have been the fat boy; there was not a gleam of mirth, or anything but feeding in his whole visage.

"He must have been fast asleep," whispered Mr. Tupman.

"I have not the least doubt of it," replied the spinster aunt.

They both laughed heartily.

Mr. Tupman was wrong. The fat boy, for once, had not been fast asleep. He was awake — wide awake — to what had been going forward.

The supper passed off without any attempt at a general conversation. The old lady had gone to bed; Isabella Wardle devoted herself exclusively to Mr. Trundle;

the spinster aunt's attentions were reserved for Mr. Tupman; and Emily's thoughts appeared to be engrossed by some distinct object — possibly they were with the absent Snodgrass.

Eleven — twelve — one o'clock had struck, and the gentlemen had not arrived. Consternation sat on every face. Could they have been waylaid and robbed? Should they send men and lanterns in every direction by which they could be supposed likely to have travelled home? or should they —— Hark! there they were. What could have made them so late? A strange voice, too! To whom could it belong? They rushed into the kitchen whither the truants had repaired, and at once obtained rather more than a glimmering of the real state of the case.

Mr. Pickwick with his hands in his pockets and his hat cocked completely over his left eye, was leaning against the dresser, shaking his head from side to side, and producing a constant succession of the blandest and most benevolent smiles without being moved thereunto by any discernible cause or pretence whatsoever; old Mr. Wardle with a highly inflamed countenance, was grasping the hand of a strange gentleman muttering protestations of eternal friendship; Mr. Winkle, supporting himself by the eight-day clock, was feebly invoking destruction upon the head of any member of the family who should suggest the propriety of his retiring for the night; and Mr. Snodgrass had sunk into a chair with an expression of the most abject and hopeless misery that the human mind can imagine, portrayed in every lineament of his expressive face.

"Is anything the matter?" inquired the three ladies.

"Nothin' the matter," replied Mr. Pickwick. "We

— we're — all right — I say, Wardle, we're all right, a'n't we?"

"I should think so," replied the jolly host, — "My dears, here's my friend Mr. Jingle — Mr. Pickwick's friend, Mr. Jingle, come 'pon — little visit."

"Is anything the matter with Mr. Snodgrass, sir?" inquired Emily, with great anxiety.

"Nothing the matter, ma'am," replied the stranger. "Cricket dinner — glorious party — capital songs — old port — claret — good — very good — wine, Ma'am — wine."

"It wasn't the wine," murmured Mr. Snodgrass, in a broken voice. "It was the salmon." (Somehow or other, it never *is* the wine in these cases.)

"Hadn't they better go to bed ma'am?" inquired Emma. "Two of the boys will carry the gentlemen up-stairs."

"I won't go to bed," said Mr. Winkle firmly.

"No living boy shall carry me," said Mr. Pickwick, stoutly; — and he went on smiling as before.

"Hurrah!" gasped Mr. Winkle faintly.

"Hurrah!" echoed Mr. Pickwick, taking off his hat and dashing it on the floor, and insanely casting his spectacles into the middle of the kitchen. — At this humorous feat he laughed outright.

"Let's — have — 'nother — bottle," cried Mr. Winkle, commencing in a very loud key, and ending in a very faint one. His head dropped upon his breast; and, muttering his invincible determination not to go to his bed, and a sanguinary regret that he had not "done for old Tupman" in the morning, he fell fast asleep; in which condition he was borne to his apartment by two young giants under the personal superintendence of the fat

boy, to whose protecting care Mr. Snodgrass shortly afterwards confided his own person. Mr. Pickwick accepted the proffered arm of Mr. Tupman, and quietly disappeared, smiling more than ever; and Mr. Wardle, after taking as affectionate a leave of the whole family as if he were ordered for immediate execution, consigned to Mr. Trundle the honor of conveying him up stairs, and retired, with a very futile attempt to look impressively solemn and dignified.

"What a shocking scene!" said the spinster aunt.

"Dis—gusting!" ejaculated both the young ladies.

"Dreadful — dreadful!" said Jingle, looking very grave; he was about a bottle and a half ahead of any of his companions. "Horrid spectacle — very."

"What a nice man!" whispered the spinster aunt to Mr. Tupman.

"Good-looking, too!" whispered Emily Wardle.

"Oh, decidedly," observed the spinster aunt.

Mr. Tupman thought of the widow at Rochester: and his mind was troubled. The succeeding half-hour's conversation was not of a nature to calm his perturbed spirit. The new visitor was very talkative, and the number of his anecdotes was only to be exceeded by the extent of his politeness. Mr. Tupman felt, that as Jingle's popularity increased, he (Tupman) retired farther into the shade. His laughter was forced — his merriment feigned; and when at last he laid his aching temples between the sheets, he thought, with horrid delight on the satisfaction it would afford him, to have Jingle's head at that moment between the feather bed and the mattress.

The indefatigable stranger rose betimes next morning, and, although his companions remained in bed overpow-

ered with the dissipation of the previous night, exerted himself most successfully to promote the hilarity of the breakfast-table. So successful were his efforts, that even the deaf old lady insisted on having one or two of his best jokes retailed through the trumpet; and even she condescended to observe to the spinster aunt, that "he" (meaning Jingle) "was an impudent young fellow:" a sentiment in which all her relations then and there present thoroughly coincided.

It was the old lady's habit on the fine summer mornings to repair to the arbor in which Mr. Tupman had already signalized himself, in form and manner following: first, the fat boy fetched from a peg behind the old lady's bedroom door, a close black satin bonnet, a warm cotton shawl, and a thick stick with a capacious handle; and the old lady having put on the bonnet and shawl at her leisure, would lean one hand on the stick and the other on the fat boy's shoulder, and walk leisurely to the arbor, where the fat boy would leave her to enjoy the fresh air for the space of half an hour; at the expiration of which time he would return and reconduct her to the house.

The old lady was very precise and very particular; and as this ceremony had been observed for three successive summers without the slightest deviation from the accustomed form, she was not a little surprised on this particular morning, to see the fat boy, instead of leaving the arbor, walk a few paces out of it, look carefully round him in every direction, and return towards her with great stealth and an air of the most profound mystery.

The old lady was timorous — most old ladies are — and her first impression was that the bloated lad was

about to do her some grievous bodily harm, with the view of possessing himself of her loose coin. She would have cried for assistance, but age and infirmity had long ago deprived her of the power of screaming; she, therefore, watched his motions with feelings of intense terror, which were in no degree diminished by his coming close up to her, and shouting in her ear in an agitated, and, as it seemed to her, a threatening tone:

"Missus!"

Now it so happened that Mr. Jingle was walking in the garden close to the arbor at this moment. He too heard the shout of "Missus," and stopped to hear more. There were three reasons for his doing so. In the first place, he was idle and curious; secondly, he was by no means scrupulous; thirdly, and lastly, he was concealed from view by some flowering shrubs. So there he stood, and there he listened.

"Missus!" shouted the fat boy.

"Well, Joe," said the trembling old lady. "I'm sure I have been a good mistress to you, Joe. You have invariably been treated very kindly. You have never had too much to do; and you have always had enough to eat."

This last was an appeal to the fat boy's most sensitive feelings. He seemed touched, as he replied emphatically:

"I knows I has."

"Then what can you want to do now?" said the old lady, gaining courage.

"I wants to make your flesh creep," replied the boy.

This sounded like a very bloodthirsty mode of showing one's gratitude; and as the old lady did not precisely

understand the process by which such a result was to be attained, all her former horrors returned.

"What do you think I see in this very arbor last night?" inquired the boy.

"Bless us! What?" exclaimed the old lady, alarmed at the solemn manner of the corpulent youth.

"The strange gentleman—him as had his arm hurt—a kissin' and huggin'——"

"Who, Joe? None of the servants, I hope."

"Worser than that," roared the fat boy in the old lady's ear.

"Not one of my grand-da'aters?"

"Worser than that."

"Worse than *that*, Joe!" said the old lady, who had thought this the extreme limit of human atrocity. "Who was it, Joe? I insist upon knowing."

The fat boy looked cautiously round, and having concluded his survey, shouted in the old lady's ear:

"Miss Rachael."

"What!" said the old lady in a shrill tone. "Speak louder."

"Miss Rachael," roared the fat boy.

"My da'ater?"

The train of nods which the fat boy gave by way of assent, communicated a *blanc-mange* like motion to his fat cheeks.

"And she suffered him!" exclaimed the old lady.

A grin stole over the fat boy's features as he said:

"I see her a-kissin' of him ag'in."

If Mr. Jingle, from his place of concealment, could have beheld the expression which the old lady's face assumed at this communication, the probability is that a sudden burst of laughter would have betrayed his

close vicinity to the summer-house. He listened attentively. Fragments of angry sentences such as, "Without my permission!" — "At her time of life." — "Miserable old 'ooman like me" — "Might have waited till I was dead," and so forth, reached his ears; and then he heard the heels of the fat boy's boots crunching the gravel, as he retired and left the old lady alone.

It was a remarkable coincidence perhaps, but it was nevertheless a fact, that Mr. Jingle, within five minutes after his arrival at Manor Farm on the preceding night, had inwardly resolved to lay siege to the heart of the spinster aunt without delay. He had observation enough to see, that his off-hand manner was by no means disagreeable to the fair object of his attack; and he had more than a strong suspicion that she possessed that most desirable of all requisites, a small independence. The imperative necessity of ousting his rival by some means or other, flashed quickly upon him, and he immediately resolved to adopt certain proceedings tending to that end and object, without a moment's delay. Fielding tells us that man is fire, and woman tow, and the Prince of Darkness sets a light to 'em. Mr. Jingle knew that young men to spinster aunts are as lighted gas to gunpowder, and he determined to essay the effect of an explosion without loss of time.

Full of reflections upon this important decision, he crept from his place of concealment, and, under cover of the shrubs before mentioned, approached the house. Fortune seemed determined to favor his design. Mr. Tupman and the rest of the gentlemen left the garden by the side gate just as he obtained a view of it; and the young ladies he knew, had walked out alone, soon after breakfast. The coast was clear.

The breakfast-parlor door was partially open. He peeped in. The spinster aunt was knitting. He coughed; she looked up and smiled. Hesitation formed no part of Mr. Alfred Jingle's character. He laid his finger on his lips mysteriously, walked in, and closed the door.

"Miss Wardle," said Mr. Jingle, with affected earnestness, "forgive intrusion — short acquaintance — no time for ceremony — all discovered."

"Sir!" said the spinster aunt, rather astonished by the unexpected apparition and somewhat doubtful of Mr. Jingle's sanity.

"Hush!" said Mr. Jingle, in a stage whisper; — "large boy — dumpling face — round eyes — rascal!" Here he shook his head expressively, and the spinster aunt trembled with agitation.

"I presume you allude to Joseph, sir?" said the lady, making an effort to appear composed.

"Yes, ma'am — damn that Joe! — treacherous dog, Joe — told the old lady — old lady furious — wild — raving — arbor — Tupman — kissing and hugging — all that sort of thing — eh, ma'am — eh?"

"Mr. Jingle," said the spinster aunt, "if you come here, sir, to insult me" ——

"Not at all — by no means," replied the unabashed Mr. Jingle; — "overheard the tale — came to warn you of your danger — tender my services — prevent the hubbub. Never mind — think it an insult — leave the room" — and he turned, as if to carry the threat into execution.

"What *shall* I do!" said the poor spinster, bursting into tears. "My brother will be furious!"

"Of course he will," said Mr. Jingle pausing — "outrageous."

"Oh Mr. Jingle, what *can* I say!" exclaimed the spinster aunt, in another flood of despair.

"Say he dreamt it," replied Mr. Jingle, coolly.

A ray of comfort darted across the mind of the spinster aunt at this suggestion. Mr. Jingle perceived it, and followed up his advantage.

"Pooh, pooh! — nothing more easy — blackguard boy — lovely woman — fat boy horsewhipped — you believed — end of the matter — all comfortable."

Whether the probability of escaping from the consequences of this ill-timed discovery was delightful to the spinster's feelings, or whether the hearing herself described as a "lovely woman" softened the asperity of her grief, we know not. She blushed slightly, and cast a grateful look on Mr. Jingle.

That insinuating gentleman sighed deeply, fixed his eyes on the spinster aunt's face for a couple of minutes, started melodramatically, and then suddenly withdrew them.

"You seem unhappy, Mr. Jingle," said the lady, in a plaintive voice. "May I show my gratitude for your kind interference, by inquiring into the cause, with a view, if possible, to its removal?"

"Ha!" exclaimed Mr. Jingle, with another start — "removal! remove *my* unhappiness, and your love bestowed upon a man who is insensible to the blessing — who even now contemplates a design upon the affections of the niece of the creature who — but no; he is my friend; I will not expose his vices. Miss Wardle — farewell!" At the conclusion of this address, the most consecutive he was ever known to utter, Mr. Jingle applied to his eyes the remnant of a handkerchief before noticed, and turned towards the door.

"Stay, Mr. Jingle!" said the spinster aunt emphatically. "You have made an allusion to Mr. Tupman — explain it."

"Never!" exclaimed Jingle, with a professional (i.e. theatrical) air. "Never!" and, by way of showing that he had no desire to be questioned further, he drew a chair close to that of the spinster aunt and sat down.

"Mr. Jingle," said the aunt, "I entreat — I implore you, if there is any dreadful mystery connected with Mr. Tupman, reveal it."

"Can I," said Mr. Jingle, fixing his eyes on the aunt's face — "Can I see — lovely creature — sacrificed at the shrine — heartless avarice!" He appeared to be struggling with various conflicting emotions for a few seconds, and then said in a low deep voice —

"Tupman only wants your money."

"The wretch!" exclaimed the spinster, with energetic indignation. (Mr. Jingle's doubts were resolved. She *had* money.)

"More than that," said Jingle — "loves another."

"Another!" ejaculated the spinster. "Who?"

"Short girl — black eyes — niece Emily."

There was a pause.

Now, if there were one individual in the whole world, of whom the spinster aunt entertained a mortal and deeply-rooted jealousy, it was this identical niece. The color rushed over her face and neck, and she tossed her head in silence with an air of ineffable contempt. At last, biting her thin lips, and bridling up, she said, —

"It can't be. I won't believe it."

"Watch 'em," said Jingle.

"I will," said the aunt.

"Watch his looks."

"I will."

"His whispers."

"I will."

"He'll sit next her at table."

"Let him."

"He'll flatter her."

"Let him."

"He'll pay her every possible attention."

"Let him."

"And he'll cut you."

"Cut *me!*" screamed the spinster aunt. "*He* cut *me;*—*will* he!" and she trembled with rage and disappointment.

"You will convince yourself?" said Jingle.

"I will."

"You'll show your spirit?"

"I will."

"You'll not have him afterwards?"

"Never."

"You'll take somebody else?"

"Yes."

"You shall."

Mr. Jingle fell on his knees, remained thereupon for five minutes thereafter: and rose the accepted lover of the spinster aunt: conditionally upon Tupman's perjury being made clear and manifest.

The burden of proof lay with Mr. Alfred Jingle; and he produced his evidence that very day at dinner. The spinster aunt could hardly believe her eyes. Mr. Tracy Tupman was established at Emily's side, ogling, whispering, and smiling, in opposition to Mr. Snodgrass. Not a word, not a look, not a glance, did he bestow upon his heart's pride of the evening before.

"Damn that boy!" thought old Mr. Wardle to him-

self. — He had heard the story from his mother. "Damn that boy! He *must* have been asleep. It's all imagination."

"Traitor!" thought the spinster aunt. "Dear Mr. Jingle was not deceiving me. Ugh! how I hate the wretch!"

The following conversation may serve to explain to our readers, this apparently unaccountable alteration of deportment, on the part of Mr. Tracy Tupman.

The time was evening; the scene the garden. There were two figures walking in a side path; one was rather short and stout; the other rather tall and slim. They were Mr. Tupman and Mr. Jingle. The stout figure commenced the dialogue.

"How did I do it?" he inquired.

"Splendid — capital — couldn't act better myself — you must repeat the part to-morrow — every evening, till further notice."

"Does Rachael still wish it?"

"Of course — she don't like it — but must be done — avert suspicion — afraid of her brother — says there's no help for it — only few days more — when old folks blinded — crown your happiness."

"Any message?"

"Love — best love — kindest regards — unalterable affection. Can I say anything for you?"

"My dear fellow," replied the unsuspicious Mr. Tupman, fervently grasping his "friend's" hand — "carry my best love — say how hard I find it to dissemble — say anything that's kind: but add how sensible I am of the necessity of the suggestion she made to me, through you, this morning. Say I applaud her wisdom and admire her discretion."

"I will. Anything more?"

"Nothing; only add how ardently I long for the time when I may call her mine, and all dissimulation may be unnecessary."

"Certainly, certainly. Anything more?"

"Oh, my friend!" said poor Mr. Tupman, again grasping the hand of his companion, "receive my warmest thanks for your disinterested kindness; and forgive me if I have ever, even in thought, done you the injustice of supposing that you *could* stand in my way. My dear friend can I ever repay you?"

"Don't talk of it," replied Mr. Jingle. He stopped short, as if suddenly recollecting something, and said,— "By-the-by — can't spare ten pounds, can you? — very particular purpose — pay you in three days."

"I dare say I can," replied Mr. Tupman, in the fulness of his heart. "Three days, you say?"

"Only three days — all over then — no more difficulties."

Mr. Tupman counted the money into his companion's hand, and he dropped it piece by piece into his pocket, as they walked towards the house.

"Be careful," said Mr. Jingle — "not a look."

"Not a wink," said Mr. Tupman.

"Not a syllable."

"Not a whisper."

"All your attentions to the niece — rather rude, than otherwise, to the aunt — only way of deceiving the old ones."

"I'll take care," said Mr. Tupman, aloud.

"And *I'll* take care," said Mr. Jingle internally; and they entered the house.

The scene of that afternoon was repeated that even-

ing, and on the three afternoons and evenings next ensuing. On the fourth, the host was in high spirits, for he had satisfied himself that there was no ground for the charge against Mr. Tupman. So was Mr. Tupman, for Mr. Jingle had told him that his affair would soon be brought to a crisis. So was Mr. Pickwick, for he was seldom otherwise. So was not Mr. Snodgrass, for he had grown jealous of Mr. Tupman. So was the old lady, for she had been winning at whist. So were Mr. Jingle and Miss Wardle, for reasons of sufficient importance in this eventful history, to be narrated in another chapter.

CHAPTER IX.

A DISCOVERY AND A CHASE.

THE supper was ready laid, the chairs were drawn round the table, bottles, jugs, and glasses were arranged upon the sideboard, and everything betokened the approach of the most convivial period in the whole four-and-twenty hours.

"Where's Rachael?" said Mr. Wardle.

"Aye, and Jingle?" added Mr. Pickwick.

"Dear me," said the host, "I wonder I haven't missed him before. Why, I don't think I've heard his voice for two hours at least. Emily, my dear, ring the bell."

The bell was rung, and the fat boy appeared.

"Where's Miss Rachael?" He couldn't say.

"Where's Mr. Jingle, then?" He didn't know.

Everybody looked surprised. It was late — past eleven o'clock. Mr. Tupman laughed in his sleeve. They were loitering somewhere, talking about *him*. Ha, ha! capital notion that — funny.

"Never mind," said Wardle, after a short pause, "they'll turn up presently, I dare say. I never wait supper for anybody."

"Excellent rule, that," said Mr. Pickwick, "admirable."

"Pray, sit down," said the host.

"Certainly," said Mr. Pickwick: and down they sat.

There was a gigantic round of cold beef on the table, and Mr. Pickwick was supplied with a plentiful portion of it. He had raised his fork to his lips, and was on the very point of opening his mouth for the reception of a piece of beef, when the hum of many voices suddenly arose in the kitchen. He paused, and laid down his fork. Mr. Wardle paused too, and insensibly released his hold of the carving-knife, which remained inserted in the beef. He looked at Mr. Pickwick. Mr. Pickwick looked at him.

Heavy footsteps were heard in the passage; the parlor-door was suddenly burst open; and the man who had cleaned Mr. Pickwick's boots on his first arrival, rushed into the room, followed by the fat boy, and all the domestics.

"What the devil's the meaning of this?" exclaimed the host.

"The kitchen chimney a'n't a-fire, is it, Emma?" inquired the old lady.

"Lor grandma! No," screamed both the young ladies.

"What's the matter?" roared the master of the house.

The man gasped for breath, and faintly ejaculated —

"They ha' gone, Mas'r! — gone right clean off, sir!" (At this juncture, Mr. Tupman was observed to lay down his knife and fork, and to turn very pale.)

"Who's gone?" said Mr. Wardle, fiercely.

"Mus'r Jingle and Miss Rachael, in a po'-chay, from Blue Lion, Muggleton. I was there; but I couldn't stop 'em; so I run off to tell 'ee."

"I paid his expenses!" said Mr. Tupman, jumping

up frantically. "He's got ten pounds of mine! — stop him! — he's swindled me! — I won't bear it! — I'll have justice, Pickwick! — I won't stand it!" and with sundry incoherent exclamations of the like nature, the unhappy gentleman spun round and round the apartment, in a transport of frenzy.

"Lord preserve us!" ejaculated Mr. Pickwick, eying the extraordinary gestures of his friend with terrified surprise. "He's gone mad! What shall we do!"

"Do!" said the stout old host, who regarded only the last words of the sentence. "Put the horse in the gig! I'll get a chaise at the Lion, and follow 'em instantly. Where" — he exclaimed, as the man ran out to execute the commission — "Where's that villain, Joe?"

"Here I am; but I ha'n't a willin," replied a voice. It was the fat boy's.

"Let me get at him, Pickwick!" cried Wardle, as he rushed at the ill-starred youth. "He was bribed by that scoundrel, Jingle, to put me on a wrong scent, by telling a cock-and-a-bull story of my sister and your friend Tupman!" (Here Mr. Tupman sunk into a chair.) "Let me get at him!"

"Don't let him!" screamed all the women, above whose exclamations, the blubbering of the fat boy, was distinctly audible.

"I won't be held!" cried the old man. "Mr. Winkle, take your hands off! Mr. Pickwick, let me go, sir!"

It was a beautiful sight, in that moment of turmoil and confusion, to behold the placid and philosophical expression of Mr. Pickwick's face, albeit somewhat flushed with exertion, as he stood with his arms firmly clasped round the extensive waist of their corpulent host, thus restraining the impetuosity of his passion, while the

fat boy was scratched, and pulled, and pushed from the room by all the females congregated therein. He had no sooner released his hold, than the man entered to announce that the gig was ready.

"Don't let him go alone!" screamed the females. "He'll kill somebody!"

"I'll go with him," said Mr. Pickwick.

"You're a good fellow, Pickwick," said the host, grasping his hand. "Emma, give Mr. Pickwick a shawl to tie round his neck — make haste. Look after your grandmother, girls; she has fainted away. Now then, are you ready?"

Mr. Pickwick's mouth and chin, having been hastily enveloped in a large shawl: his hat having been put on his head, and his great-coat thrown over his arm, he replied in the affirmative.

They jumped into the gig. "Give her, her head, Tom," cried the host; and away they went, down the narrow lanes: jolting in and out of the cart-ruts, and bumping up against the hedges on either side, as if they would go to pieces every moment.

"How much are they ahead?" shouted Wardle, as they drove up to the door of the Blue Lion, round which a little crowd had collected, late as it was.

"Not above three quarters of an hour," was everybody's reply.

"Chaise and four directly! — out with 'em! Put up the gig afterwards."

"Now, boys!" cried the landlord — "chaise and four out — make haste — look alive there!"

Away ran the hostlers, and the boys. The lanterns glimmered, as the men ran to and fro; the horses' hoofs clattered on the uneven paving of the yard; the chaise

rumbled as it was drawn out of the coach-house; and all was noise and bustle.

"Now then! — is that chaise coming out to-night?" cried Wardle.

"Coming down the yard now, sir," replied the hostler.

Out came the chaise — in went the horses — on sprung the boys — in got the travellers.

"Mind — the seven-mile stage in less than half an hour!" shouted Wardle.

"Off with you!"

The boys applied whip and spur, the waiters shouted, the hostlers cheered, and away they went, fast and furiously.

"Pretty situation," thought Mr. Pickwick, when he had had a moment's time for reflection. "Pretty situation for the General Chairman of the Pickwick Club. Damp chaise — strange horses — fifteen miles an hour — and twelve o'clock at night!"

For the first three or four miles, not a word was spoken by either of the gentlemen, each being too much immersed in his own reflections, to address any observations to his companion. When they had gone over that much ground, however, and the horses getting thoroughly warmed began to do their work in really good style, Mr. Pickwick became too much exhilarated with the rapidity of the motion, to remain any longer perfectly mute.

"We're sure to catch them, I think," said he.

"Hope so," replied his companion.

"Fine night," said Mr. Pickwick, looking up at the moon, which was shining brightly.

"So much the worse," returned Wardle; "for they'll have had all the advantage of the moonlight to get the

start of us, and we shall lose it. It will have gone down in another hour."

"It will be rather unpleasant going at this rate in the dark, won't it?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"I dare say it will," replied his friend dryly.

Mr. Pickwick's temporary excitement began to sober down a little, as he reflected upon the inconveniences and dangers of the expedition in which he had so thoughtlessly embarked. He was roused by a loud shouting of the post-boy on the leader.

"Yo — yo — yo — yo — yoe," went the first boy.

"Yo — yo — yo — yoe!" went the second.

"Yo — yo — yo — yoe!" chimed in old Wardle himself, most lustily, with his head and half his body out of the coach-window.

"Yo — yo — yo — yoe!" shouted Mr. Pickwick, taking up the burden of the cry, though he had not the slightest notion of its meaning or object. And amidst the yo — yoing of the whole four, the chaise stopped.

"What's the matter?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"There's a gate here," replied old Wardle. "We shall hear something of the fugitives."

After a lapse of five minutes, consumed in incessant knocking and shouting, an old man in his shirt and trousers emerged from the turnpike-house, and opened the gate.

"How long is it since a post-chaise went through here?" inquired Mr. Wardle.

"How long?"

"Ah!"

"Why, I don't rightly know. It worn't a long time ago, nor it worn't a short time ago — just between the two, perhaps."

"Has any chaise been by at all?"

"Oh yes, there's been a chay by."

"How long ago, my friend," interposed Mr. Pickwick, "an hour?"

"Ah, I dare say it might be," replied the man.

"Or two hours?" inquired the post-boy on the wheeler.

"Well, I shouldn't wonder if it was," returned the old man doubtfully.

"Drive on, boys," cried the testy old gentleman: "don't waste any more time with that old idiot!"

"Idiot!" exclaimed the old man with a grin, as he stood in the middle of the road with the gate half-closed, watching the chaise which rapidly diminished in the increasing distance. "No — not much o' that either; you've lost ten minutes here, and gone away as wise as you came arter all. If every man on the line as has a guinea give him earns it half as well, you won't catch t'other chay this side Mich'lmas, old short and fat." And with another prolonged grin, the old man closed the gate, reentered his house, and bolted the door after him.

Meanwhile the chaise proceeded, without any slackening of pace, towards the conclusion of the stage. The moon, as Wardle had foretold, was rapidly on the wane; large tiers of dark heavy clouds which had been gradually overspreading the sky for some time past, now formed one black mass overhead; and large drops of rain which pattered every now and then against the windows of the chaise, seemed to warn the travellers of the rapid approach of a stormy night. The wind, too, which was directly against them, swept in furious gusts down the narrow road, and howled dismally through the trees which skirted the pathway. Mr. Pickwick drew his

coat closer about him, coiled himself more snugly up into the corner of the chaise, and fell into a sound sleep, from which he was only awakened by the stopping of the vehicle, the sound of the hostler's bell, and a loud cry of "Horses on directly!"

But here another delay occurred. The boys were sleeping with such mysterious soundness, that it took five minutes apiece to wake them. The hostler had somehow or other mislaid the key of the stable, and even when that was found, two sleepy helpers put the wrong harness on the wrong horses, and the whole process of harnessing had to be gone through afresh. Had Mr. Pickwick been alone, these multiplied obstacles would have completely put an end to the pursuit at once, but old Wardle was not to be so easily daunted; and he laid about him with such hearty good-will, cuffing this man, and pushing that; strapping a buckle here, and taking in a link there, that the chaise was ready in a much shorter time than could reasonably have been expected, under so many difficulties.

They resumed their journey; and certainly the prospect before them was by no means encouraging. The stage was fifteen miles long, the night was dark, the wind high, and the rain pouring in torrents. It was impossible to make any great way against such obstacles united: it was hard upon one o'clock already; and nearly two hours were consumed in getting to the end of the stage. Here, however, an object presented itself, which rekindled their hopes, and reanimated their drooping spirits.

"When did this chaise come in?" cried old Wardle, leaping out of his own vehicle, and pointing to one cov ered with wet mud, which was standing in the yard.

"Not a quarter of an hour ago, sir;" replied the hostler, to whom the question was addressed.

"Lady and gentleman?" inquired Wardle, almost breathless with impatience.

"Yes, sir."

"Tall gentleman — dress coat — long legs — thin body?"

"Yes, sir."

"Elderly lady — thin face — rather skinny — eh?"

"Yes, sir."

"By Heavens, it's the couple, Pickwick," exclaimed the old gentleman.

"Would have been here before," said the hostler, "but they broke a trace."

"It is!" said Wardle, "it is, by Jove! Chaise and four instantly! We shall catch them yet, before they reach the next stage. A guinea apiece, boys — be alive there — bustle about — there's good fellows."

And with such admonitions as these, the old gentleman ran up and down the yard, and bustled to and fro, in a state of excitement which communicated itself to Mr. Pickwick also; and under the influence of which, that gentleman got himself into complicated entanglements with harness, and mixed up with horses and wheels of chaises, in the most surprising manner, firmly believing that by so doing, he was materially forwarding the preparations for their resuming their journey.

"Jump in — jump in!" cried old Wardle, climbing into the chaise, pulling up the steps, and slamming the door after him. "Come along! Make haste!" And before Mr. Pickwick knew precisely what he was about, he felt himself forced in at the other door, by one pull

from the old gentleman, and one push from the hostler and off they were again.

"Ah! we *are* moving now," said the old gentleman exultingly. They were indeed, as was sufficiently testified to Mr. Pickwick, by his constant collisions either with the hard wood-work of the chaise, or the body of his companion.

"Hold up!" said the stout old Mr. Wardle, as Mr Pickwick dived head foremost into his capacious waistcoat

"I never did feel such a jolting in my life," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Never mind," replied his companion, "it'll soon be over. Steady, steady."

Mr. Pickwick planted himself into his own corner, as firmly as he could; and on whirled the chaise faster than ever.

They had travelled in this way about three miles, when Mr. Wardle, who had been looking out of the window for two or three minutes, suddenly drew in his face, covered with splashes, and exclaimed, in breathless eagerness —

"Here they are!"

Mr. Pickwick thrust his head out of his window. Yes; there was a chaise and four, a short distance before them, dashing along at full gallop.

"Go on, go on," almost shrieked the old gentleman. "Two guineas apiece, boys — don't let 'em gain on us — keep it up — keep it up."

The horses in the first chaise started on at their utmost speed; and those in Mr. Wardle's galloped furiously behind them.

"I see his head," exclaimed the choleric old man. "Damme, I see his head."

"So do I," said Mr. Pickwick, "that's he."

Mr. Pickwick was not mistaken. The countenance of Mr. Jingle, completely coated with the mud thrown up by the wheels, was plainly discernible at the window of his chaise; and the motion of his arm, which he was waving violently towards the postilions, denoted that he was encouraging them to increased exertion.

The interest was intense. Fields, trees, and hedges seemed to rush past them with the velocity of a whirlwind, so rapid was the pace at which they tore along. They were close by the side of the first chaise. Jingle's voice could be plainly heard, even above the din of the wheels, urging on the boys. Old Mr. Wardle foamed with rage and excitement. He roared out scoundrels and villains by the dozen, clenched his fist and shook it expressively at the object of his indignation; but Mr Jingle only answered with a contemptuous smile, and replied to his menaces by a shout of triumph, as his horses, answering the increased application of whip and spur, broke into a faster gallop, and left the pursuers behind.

Mr. Pickwick had just drawn in his head, and Mr. Wardle, exhausted with shouting, had done the same, when a tremendous jolt threw them forward against the front of the vehicle. There was a sudden bump — a loud crash — away rolled a wheel, and over went the chaise.

After a very few seconds of bewilderment and confusion, in which nothing but the plunging of horses, and breaking of glass, could be made out, Mr. Pickwick felt himself violently pulled out from among the ruins of the chaise; and as soon as he had gained his feet, extricated his head from the skirts of his great-coat which materi-

ally impeded the usefulness of his spectacles, the full disaster of the case met his view.

Old Mr. Wardle without a hat, and his clothes torn in several places, stood by his side, and the fragments of the chaise lay scattered at their feet. The post-boys, who had succeeded in cutting the traces, were standing, disfigured with mud, and disordered by hard riding, by the horses' heads. About a hundred yards in advance was the other chaise, which had pulled up on hearing the crash. The postilions, each with a broad grin convulsing his countenance, were viewing the adverse party from their saddles, and Mr. Jingle was contemplating the wreck from the coach-window, with evident satisfaction. The day was just breaking, and the whole scene was rendered perfectly visible by the gray light of the morning.

"Hallo!" shouted the shameless Jingle, "anybody damaged? — elderly gentlemen — no light weights — dangerous work — very."

"You're a rascal!" roared Wardle.

"Ha! ha!" replied Jingle; and then he added, with a knowing wink, and a jerk of the thumb towards the interior of the chaise — "I say — she's very well — desires her compliments — begs you won't trouble yourself — love to *Tuppy* — won't you get up behind? — drive on boys."

The postilions resumed their proper attitudes, and away rattled the chaise, Mr. Jingle fluttering in derision a white handkerchief from the coach-window.

Nothing in the whole adventure, not even the upset, had disturbed the calm and equable current of Mr. Pickwick's temper. The villany however, which could first borrow money of his faithful follower, and then abbre-

viate his name to "Tuppy," was more than he could patiently bear. He drew his breath hard, and colored up to the very tips of his spectacles, as he said, slowly and emphatically —

"If ever I meet that man again, I'll" —

"Yes, yes," interrupted Wardle, "that's all very well: but while we stand talking here, they'll get their license, and be married in London."

Mr. Pickwick paused, bottled up his vengeance, and corked it down.

"How far is it to the next stage?" inquired Mr. Wardle, of one of the boys.

"Six mile, a'n't it, Tom?"

"Rayther better."

"Rayther better nor six mile, sir."

"Can't be helped," said Wardle, "we must walk it, Pickwick."

"No help for it," replied that truly great man.

So sending forward one of the boys on horseback, to procure a fresh chaise and horses, and leaving the other behind to take care of the broken one, Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Wardle set manfully forward on the walk, first tying their shawls round their necks, and slouching down their hats to escape as much as possible from the deluge of rain, which after a slight cessation, had again begun to pour heavily down.

CHAPTER X.

CLEARING UP ALL DOUBTS (IF ANY EXISTED) OF THE DISINTERESTEDNESS OF MR. JINGLE'S CHARACTER.

THERE are in London several old inns, once the head-quarters of celebrated coaches in the days when coaches performed their journeys in a graver and more solemn manner than they do in these times; but which have now degenerated into little more than the abiding and booking places of country wagons. The reader would look in vain for any of these ancient hostelries, among the Golden Crosses and Bull and Mouths, which rear their stately fronts in the improved streets of London. If he would light upon any of these old places, he must direct his steps to the obscurer quarters of the town; and there in some secluded nooks he will find several, still standing with a kind of gloomy sturdiness, amidst the modern innovations which surround them.

In the Borough especially, there still remain some half-dozen old inns, which have preserved their external features unchanged, and which have escaped alike the rage for public improvement, and the encroachments of private speculation. Great, rambling, queer, old places they are, with galleries, and passages, and staircases, wide enough, and antiquated enough, to furnish materials

for a hundred ghost stories, supposing we should ever be reduced to the lamentable necessity of inventing any, and that the world should exist long enough to exhaust the innumerable veracious legends connected with old London Bridge, and its adjacent neighborhood on the Surrey side.

It was in the yard of one of these inns — of no less celebrated a one than the White Hart — that a man was busily employed in brushing the dirt off a pair of boots, early on the morning succeeding the events narrated in the last chapter. He was habited in a coarse striped waistcoat, with black calico sleeves, and blue glass buttons: drab breeches and leggings. A bright red handkerchief was wound in a very loose and unstudied style round his neck, and an old white hat was carelessly thrown on one side of his head. There were two rows of boots before him, one cleaned, and the other dirty, and at every addition he made to the clean row, he paused from his work, and contemplated its results with evident satisfaction.

The yard presented none of that bustle and activity which are the usual characteristics of a large coach inn. Three or four lumbering wagons, each with a pile of goods beneath its ample canopy, about the height of the second-floor window of an ordinary house, were stowed away beneath a lofty roof which extended over one end of the yard; and another, which was probably to commence its journey that morning, was drawn out into the open space. A double tier of bedroom galleries, with old clumsy balustrades, ran round two sides of the straggling area, and a double row of bells to correspond, sheltered from the weather by a little sloping roof, hung over the door leading to the bar and coffee-room. Two

or three gigs and chaise-carts were wheeled up under different little sheds and penthouses; and the occasional heavy tread of a cart-horse, or rattling of a chain at the farther end of the yard, announced to anybody who cared about the matter, that the stable lay in that direction. When we add that a few boys in smock-frocks were lying asleep on heavy packages, woolpacks, and other articles that were scattered about on heaps of straw, we have described, as fully as need be, the general appearance of the yard of the White Hart Inn, High Street, Borough, on the particular morning in question.

A loud ringing of one of the bells was followed by the appearance of a smart chambermaid in the upper sleeping gallery, who, after tapping at one of the doors, and receiving a request from within, called over the balustrades:

"Sam!"

"Hallo," replied the man with the white hat.

"Number twenty-two wants his boots."

"Ask number twenty-two, wether he'll have 'em now, or wait till he gets 'em," was the reply.

"Come, don't be a fool, Sam," said the girl, coaxingly, "the gentleman wants his boots directly."

"Well, you *are* a nice young 'ooman for a musical party, you are," said the boot-cleaner. "Look at these here boots — eleven pair o' boots; and one shoe as b'longs to number six, with the wooden leg. The eleven boots is to be called at half-past eight and the shoe at nine. Who's number twenty-two, that's to put all the others out? No, no; reg'lar rotation, as Jack Ketch said, wen he tied the men up. Sorry to keep you a waitin', sir, but I'll attend to you directly."

Saying which, the man in the white hat set to work upon a top-boot with increased assiduity.

There was another loud ring; and the bustling old landlady of the White Hart made her appearance in the opposite gallery.

"Sam," cried the landlady, "where's that lazy, idle — why Sam — oh, there you are; why don't you answer?"

"Wouldn't be gen-teel to answer, till you'd done talking," replied Sam, gruffly.

"Here, clean them shoes for number seventeen directly, and take 'em to private sitting-room, number five, first floor."

The landlady flung a pair of lady's shoes into the yard, and bustled away.

"Number five," said Sam, as he picked up the shoes, and taking a piece of chalk from his pocket, made a memorandum of their destination on the soles — "Lady's shoes and private sittin'-room! I suppose she didn't come in the waggin."

"She came in early this morning," cried the girl, who was still leaning over the railing of the gallery, "with a gentleman in a hackney coach, and it's him as wants his boots, and you'd better do 'em, that's all about it."

"Vy didn't you say so before," said Sam, with great indignation, singling out the boots in question from the heap before him. "For all I know'd, he vas one o' the regular three-pennies. Private room! and a lady too! If he's anything of a gen'lm'n, he's vorth a shillin' a day, let alone the arrands."

Stimulated by this inspiring reflection, Mr. Samuel brushed away with such hearty good-will, that in a few minutes the boots and shoes, with a polish which would have struck envy to the soul of the amiable Mr. Warren,

(for they used Day and Martin at the White Hart) had arrived at the door of number five.

"Come in," said a man's voice, in reply to Sam's rap at the door.

Sam made his best bow, and stepped into the presence of a lady and gentleman seated at breakfast. Having officiously deposited the gentleman's boots right and left at his feet, and the lady's shoes right and left at hers, he backed towards the door.

"Boots," said the gentleman.

"Sir," said Sam, closing the door, and keeping his hand on the knob of the lock.

"Do you know — what's a-name — Doctors' Commons?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where is it?"

"Paul's Church-yard, sir; low archway on the carriage-side, bookseller's at one corner, hot-el on the other, and two porters in the middle as touts for licenses."

"Touts for licenses!" said the gentleman.

"Touts for licenses," replied Sam. "Two coves in vhite aprons — touches their hats wen you walk in — 'License, sir, license?' Queer sort, them, and their mas'rs too, sir — Old Baily Proctors — and no mistake."

"What do they do?" inquired the gentleman.

"Do! *You*, sir! That a'n't the wost on it, neither. They puts things into old gen'lm'n's heads as they never dreamed of. My father, sir, wos a coachman. A widower he wos, and fat enough for anything — uncommon fat, to be sure. His missus dies, and leaves him four hundred pound. Down he goes to the Commons, to see the lawyer and draw the blunt — wery smart — top-boots on — nosegay in his button-hole — broad-brimmed tile

— green shawl — quite the gen'lm'n. Goes through the archvay, thinking how he should inwest the money — up comes the touter, touches his hat — 'License, sir, license?' — 'What's that?' says my father. — 'License, sir,' says he. — 'What license?' says my father. — 'Marriage license,' says the touter. — 'Dash my veskit,' says my father, 'I never thought o' that.' — 'I think you wants one, sir,' says the touter. My father pulls up, and thinks a bit — 'No,' says he, 'damme, I'm too old, b'sides I'm a many sizes too large,' says he. — 'Not a bit on it, sir,' says the touter. — 'Think not?' says my father. — 'I'm sure not,' says he; 'we married a gen'lm'n twice your size, last Monday.' — 'Did you, though?' said my father. — 'To be sure, we did,' says the touter, 'you're a babby to him — this way, sir — this way!' — and sure enough my father walks arter him, like a tame monkey behind a horgan, into a little back office, vere a feller sat among dirty papers and tin boxes, making believe he was busy. 'Pray take a seat, vile I makes out the affidavit, sir,' says the lawyer. — 'Thankee, sir,' says my father, and down he sat, and stared with all his eyes, and his mouth vide open, at the names on the boxes. — 'What's your name, sir?' says the lawyer. — 'Tony Weller,' says my father. — 'Parish?' says the lawyer. — 'Belle Savage,' says my father; for he stopped there wen he drove up, and he know'd nothing about parishes, *he* didn't. — 'And what's the lady's name?' says the lawyer. My father was struck all of a heap. 'Blessed if I know,' says he. — 'Not know!' says the lawyer. — 'No more nor you do,' says my father, 'can't I put that in arterwards?' — 'Impossible!' says the lawyer. — Wery well,' says my father, after he'd thought a moment, 'put down Mrs. Clarke.' — 'What Clarke?' says

the lawyer, dipping his pen in the ink. — 'Susan Clarke, Markis o' Granby, Dorking,' says my father; 'she'll have me, if I ask, I des-say — I never said nothing to her, but she'll have me, I know.' The license was made out, and she *did* have him, and what's more she's got him now; and *I* never had any of the four hundred pound, worse luck. Beg your pardon, sir," said Sam, when he had concluded, "but wen I gets on this here grievance, I runs on like a new barrow vith the wheel greased." Having said which, and having paused for an instant to see whether he was wanted for anything more, Sam left the room.

"Half-past nine — just the time — off at once;" said the gentleman, whom we need hardly introduce as Mr. Jingle.

"Time — for what?" said the spinster aunt, coquettishly.

"License, dearest of angels — give notice at the church — call you mine, to-morrow," — said Mr. Jingle, and he squeezed the spinster aunt's hand.

"The license!" said Rachael, blushing.

"The license," repeated Mr. Jingle —

> "In hurry, post-haste for a license,
> In hurry, ding dong I come back."

"How you run on," said Rachael.

"Run on — nothing to the hours, days, weeks, months, years, when we're united — *run* on — they'll fly on — bolt — mizzle — steam-engine — thousand-horse power — nothing to it."

"Can't — can't we be married before to-morrow morning?" inquired Rachael.

"Impossible — can't be — notice at the church —

leave the license to-day — ceremony come off to-morrow."

"I am so terrified, lest my brother should discover us!" said Rachael.

"Discover — nonsense — too much shaken by the break-down — besides — extreme caution — gave up the post-chaise — walked on — took a hackney-coach — came to the Borough — last place in the world that he'd look in — ha! ha! — capital notion that — very."

"Don't be long," said the spinster, affectionately, as Mr. Jingle stuck the pinched-up hat on his head.

"Long away from *you?* — Cruel charmer," and Mr. Jingle skipped playfully up to the spinster aunt, imprinted a chaste kiss upon her lips, and danced out of the room.

"Dear man!" said the spinster, as the door closed after him.

"Rum old girl," said Mr. Jingle, as he walked down the passage.

It is painful to reflect upon the perfidy of our species; and we will not therefore, pursue the thread of Mr. Jingle's meditations, as he wended his way to Doctors' Commons. It will be sufficient for our purpose to relate, that escaping the snares of the dragons in white aprons, who guard the entrance to that enchanted region, he reached the Vicar General's office in safety, and having procured a highly flattering address on parchment, from the Archbishop of Canterbury, to his "trusty and well-beloved Alfred Jingle and Rachael Wardle, greeting," he carefully deposited the mystic document in his pocket, and retraced his steps in triumph to the Borough.

He was yet on his way to the White Hart, when two

plump gentlemen and one thin one, entered the yard, and looked round in search of some authorized person of whom they could make a few inquiries. Mr. Samuel Weller happened to be at that moment engaged in burnishing a pair of painted tops, the personal property of a farmer, who was refreshing himself with a slight lunch of two or three pounds of cold beef and a pot or two of porter, after the fatigues of the Borough market; and to him the thin gentleman straightway advanced —

"My friend," said the thin gentleman.

"You're one o' the adwice gratis order," thought Sam, "or you wouldn't be so wery fond o' me all at once." But he only said — "Well, sir."

"My friend," said the thin gentleman, with a conciliatory hem — "Have you got many people stopping here, now? Pretty busy. Eh?"

Sam stole a look at the inquirer. He was a little high-dried man, with a dark squeezed-up face, and small restless black eyes, that kept winking and twinkling on each side of his little inquisitive nose, as if they were playing a perpetual game of peep-bo with that feature. He was dressed all in black, with boots as shiny as his eyes, a low white neckcloth, and a clean shirt with a frill to it. A gold watch-chain, and seals, depended from his fob. He carried his black kid gloves *in* his hands, not *on* them; and as he spoke, thrust his wrists beneath his coat-tails, with the air of a man who was in the habit of propounding some regular posers.

"Pretty busy, eh?" said the little man.

"Oh, werry well, sir," replied Sam, "we shan't be bankrupts, and we shan't make our fort'ns. We eats our biled mutton without capers, and don't care for horseradish wen we can get beef."

"Ah," said the little man, "you're a wag, a'n't you?"

"My eldest brother was troubled with that complaint," said Sam, "it may be catching — I used to sleep with him."

"This is a curious old house of yours," said the little man, looking round him.

"If you'd sent word you was a-coming, we'd ha' had it repaired," replied the imperturbable Sam.

The little man seemed rather baffled by these several repulses, and a short consultation took place between him and the two plump gentlemen. At its conclusion the little man took a pinch of snuff from an oblong silver box, and was apparently on the point of renewing the conversation, when one of the plump gentlemen, who in addition to a benevolent countenance possessed a pair of spectacles, and a pair of black gaiters, interfered —

"The fact of the matter is," said the benevolent gentleman, "that my friend here (pointing to the other plump gentleman), will give you half a guinea, if you'll answer one or two" —

"Now, my dear sir — my dear sir," said the little man, "pray allow me — my dear sir, the very first principle to be observed in these cases, is this: if you place a matter in the hands of a professional man, you must in no way interfere in the progress of the business; you must repose implicit confidence in him. Really, Mr. (he turned to the other plump gentleman, and said) — I forget your friend's name."

"Pickwick," said Mr. Wardle, for it was no other than that jolly personage.

"Ah, Pickwick — really Mr. Pickwick, my dear sir, excuse me — I shall be happy to receive any private

suggestions of yours, as *amicus curiæ*, but you must see the impropriety of your interfering with my conduct in this case, with such an *ad captandum* argument, as the offer of half a guinea. Really, my dear sir, really,' and the little man took an argumentative pinch of snuff, and looked very profound.

"My only wish, sir," said Mr. Pickwick, "was to bring this very unpleasant matter to as speedy a close as possible."

"Quite right — quite right," said the little man.

"With which view," continued Mr. Pickwick, "I made use of the argument which my experience of men has taught me is the most likely to succeed in any case."

"Ay, ay," said the little man, "very good, very good, indeed; but you should have suggested it to *me*. My dear sir, I'm quite certain you cannot be ignorant of the extent of confidence which must be placed in professional men. If any authority can be necessary on such a point, my dear sir, let me refer you to the well-known case in Barnwell and" —

"Never mind George Barnwell," interrupted Sam, who had remained a wondering listener during this short colloquy; "everybody knows vhat sort of a case his was, tho' it's always been my opinion, mind you, that the young 'ooman deserved scragging a precious sight more than he did. Hows'ever, that's neither here nor there. You want me to accept of half a guinea. Werry well, I'm agreeable: I can't say no fairer than that, can I, sir? (Mr. Pickwick smiled.) Then the next question is, what the devil do you want with me, as the man said wen he see the ghost?"

"We want to know" — said Mr. Wardle.

"Now, my dear sir — my dear sir," interposed the busy little man.

Mr. Wardle shrugged his shoulders, and was silent.

"We want to know," said the little man solemnly; "and we ask the question of you, in order that we may not awaken apprehensions inside — we want to know who you've got in this house, at present."

"Who there is in the house!" said Sam, in whose mind the inmates were always represented by that particular article of their costume, which came under his immediate superintendence. "There's a wooden leg in number six; there's a pair of Hessians in thirteen; there's two pair of halves in the commercial; there's these here painted tops in the snuggery inside the bar; and five more tops in the coffee-room.

"Nothing more?" said the little man.

"Stop a bit," replied Sam, suddenly recollecting himself. "Yes; there's a pair of Wellingtons a good deal worn, and a pair o' lady's shoes, in number five."

"What sort of shoes?" hastily inquired Wardle, who, together with Mr. Pickwick, had been lost in bewilderment at the singular catalogue of visitors.

"Country make," replied Sam.

"Any maker's name?"

"Brown."

"Where of?"

"Muggleton."

"It *is* them," exclaimed Wardle. "By Heavens, we've found them."

"Hush!" said Sam. "The Wellingtons has gone to Doctors' Commons."

"No," said the little man.

"Yes, for a license."

"We're in time," exclaimed Wardle. "Show us the room; not a moment is to be lost."

"Pray, my dear sir, pray," said the little man; "caution, caution." He drew from his pocket a red silk purse, and looked very hard at Sam as he drew out a sovereign.

Sam grinned expressively.

"Show us into the room at once, without announcing us," said the little man, "and it's yours."

Sam threw the painted tops into a corner, and led the way through a dark passage, and up a wide staircase. He paused at the end of a second passage, and held out his hand.

"Here it is," whispered the attorney, as he deposited the money in the hand of their guide.

The man stepped forward for a few paces, followed by the two friends and their legal adviser. He stopped at a door.

"Is this the room?" murmured the little gentleman.

Sam nodded assent.

Old Wardle opened the door; and the whole three walked into the room just as Mr. Jingle, who had that moment returned, had produced the license to the spinster aunt.

The spinster uttered a loud shriek, and, throwing herself in a chair, covered her face with her hands. Mr. Jingle crumpled up the license, and thrust it into his coat-pocket. The unwelcome visitors advanced into the middle of the room.

"You — you are a nice rascal, ar'n't you?" exclaimed Wardle, breathless with passion.

"My dear sir, my dear sir," said the little man, laying his hat on the table. "Pray, consider — pray. Defa-

mation of character: action for damages. Calm yourself, my dear sir, pray" —

"How dare you drag my sister from my house?" said the old man.

"Ay — ay — very good," said the little gentleman, "you may ask that. How dare you, sir? — eh, sir?"

"Who the devil are you?" inquired Mr. Jingle, in so fierce a tone, that the little gentleman involuntarily fell back a step or two.

"Who is he, you scoundrel," interposed Wardle. "He's my lawyer, Mr. Perker, of Gray's Inn. Perker, I'll have this fellow prosecuted — indicted — I'll — I'll — I'll ruin him. And you," continued Mr. Wardle, turning abruptly round to his sister, "you, Rachael, at a time of life when you ought to know better, what do *you* mean by running away with a vagabond, disgracing your family, and making yourself miserable? Get on your bonnet, and come back. Call a hackney-coach there, directly, and bring this lady's bill, d'ye hear — d'ye hear?"

"Cert'nly, sir," replied Sam, who had answered Wardle's violent ringing of the bell with a degree of celerity, which must have appeared marvellous to anybody who didn't know that his eye had been applied to the outside of the keyhole during the whole interview.

"Get on your bonnet," repeated Wardle.

"Do nothing of the kind," said Jingle. "Leave the room, sir — no business here — lady's free to act as she pleases — more than one-and-twenty."

"More than one-and-twenty!" ejaculated Wardle, contemptuously. "More than one-and-forty!"

"I a'n't," said the spinster aunt, her indignation getting the better of her determination to faint.

"You are," replied Wardle, "you're fifty if you're an hour."

Here the spinster aunt uttered a loud shriek, and became senseless.

"A glass of water," said the humane Mr. Pickwick, summoning the landlady.

"A *glass* of water!" said the passionate Wardle. "Bring a bucket, and throw it all over her; it'll do her good, and she richly deserves it."

"Ugh, you brute!" ejaculated the kind-hearted landlady. "Poor dear." And with sundry ejaculations, of "Come now, there's a dear — drink a little of this — it'll do you good — don't give way so — there's a love," &c., &c., the landlady, assisted by a chambermaid, proceeded to vinegar the forehead, beat the hands, titillate the nose, and unlace the stays of the spinster aunt, and to administer such other restoratives as are usually applied by compassionate females to ladies who are endeavoring to ferment themselves into hysterics.

"Coach is ready, sir," said Sam, appearing at the door.

"Come along," cried Wardle. "I'll carry her downstairs."

At this proposition the hysterics came on with redoubled violence.

The landlady was about to enter a very violent protest against this proceeding, and had already given vent to an indignant inquiry whether Mr. Wardle considered himself a lord of the creation, when Mr. Jingle interposed —

"Boots," said he, "get me an officer."

"Stay, stay," said little Mr. Perker. "Consider, sir, consider."

"I'll *not* consider," replied Jingle, "she's her own mistress — see who dares to take her away — unless she wishes it."

"I *won't* be taken away," murmured the spinster aunt. "I *don't* wish it." (Here there was a frightful relapse.)

"My dear sir," said the little man, in a low tone, taking Mr. Wardle and Mr. Pickwick apart: "My dear sir, we're in a very awkward situation. It's a distressing case — very; I never knew one more so; but really, my dear sir, really we have no power to control this lady's actions. I warned you before we came, my dear sir, that there was nothing to look to but a compromise."

There was a short pause.

"What kind of compromise would you recommend?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"Why, my dear sir, our friend's in an unpleasant position — very much so. We must be content to suffer some pecuniary loss."

"I'll suffer any, rather than submit to this disgrace, and let her, fool as she is, be made miserable for life," said Wardle.

"I rather think it can be done," said the bustling little man. "Mr. Jingle, will you step with us into the next room for a moment?"

Mr. Jingle assented, and the quartette walked into an empty apartment.

"Now sir," said the little man, as he carefully closed the door, "is there no way of accommodating this matter — step this way sir, for a moment — into this window, sir, where we can be alone — there, sir, there, pray sit down, sir. Now, my dear sir, between you and I, we know very well, my dear sir, that you have

run off with this lady for the sake of her money. Don't frown, sir, don't frown; I say, between you and I, *we* know it. We are both men of the world, and *we* know very well that our friends here are not — eh?"

Mr. Jingle's face gradually relaxed, and something distantly resembling a wink, quivered for an instant in his left eye.

"Very good, very good," said the little man, observing the impression he had made. "Now the fact is, that beyond a few hundreds, the lady has little or nothing till the death of her mother — fine old lady, my dear sir."

"*Old*," said Mr. Jingle, briefly but emphatically.

"Why, yes," said the attorney with a slight cough. "You are right, my dear sir, she is *rather* old. She comes of an old family though, my dear sir; old in every sense of the word. The founder of that family came into Kent, when Julius Cæsar invaded Britain; — only one member of it, since, who hasn't lived to eighty-five, and *he* was beheaded by one of the Henrys. The old lady is not seventy-three now, my dear sir." The little man paused, and took a pinch of snuff.

"Well," cried Mr. Jingle.

"Well, my dear sir — you don't take snuff? — ah! so much the better — expensive habit — well, my dear sir, you're a fine young man, man of the world — able to push your fortune, if you had capital, eh?"

"Well," said Mr. Jingle again.

"Do you comprehend me?"

"Not quite."

"Don't you think — now, my dear sir, I put it to you, *don't* you think — that fifty pounds and liberty, would be better than Miss Wardle and expectation?"

"Won't do — not half enough!" said Mr. Jingle rising.

"Nay, nay, my dear sir," remonstrated the little attorney, seizing him by the button. "Good round sum — a man like you could treble it in no time — great deal to be done with fifty pounds, my dear sir."

"More to be done with a hundred and fifty," replied Mr. Jingle coolly.

"Well, my dear sir, we won't waste time splitting straws," resumed the little man, "say — say — seventy."

"Won't do," said Mr. Jingle.

"Don't go away, my dear sir — pray don't hurry," said the little man. "Eighty; come: I'll write you a check at once."

"Won't do," said Mr. Jingle.

"Well, my dear sir, well," said the little man, still detaining him; "just tell me what *will* do."

"Expensive affair," said Mr. Jingle. "Money out of pocket — posting, nine pounds; license, three — that's twelve — compensation, a hundred — hundred and twelve — breach of honor — and loss of the lady" —

"Yes, my dear sir, yes," said the little man, with a knowing look, "never mind the last two items. That's a hundred and twelve — say a hundred — come."

"And twenty," said Mr. Jingle.

"Come, come, I'll write you a check," said the little man; and down he sat at the table for that purpose.

"I'll make it payable the day after to-morrow," said the little man, with a look towards Mr. Wardle; "and we can get the lady away, meanwhile." Mr. Wardle sullenly nodded assent.

"A hundred," said the little man.

"And twenty," said Mr. Jingle.

"My dear sir," remonstrated the little man.

"Give it him," interposed Mr. Wardle, "and let him go."

The check was written by the little gentleman, and pocketed by Mr. Jingle.

"Now, leave this house instantly!" said Wardle, starting up.

"My dear sir," urged the little man.

"And mind," said Mr. Wardle, "that nothing should have induced me to make this compromise — not even a regard for my family — if I had not known, that the moment you got any money in that pocket of yours, you'd go to the devil faster, if possible, than you would without it" —

"My dear sir," urged the little man again.

"Be quiet, Perker," resumed Wardle. "Leave the room, sir."

"Off directly," said the unabashed Jingle. "Bye, bye, Pickwick."

If any dispassionate spectator could have beheld the countenance of the illustrious man, whose name forms the leading feature of the title of this work, during the latter part of this conversation, he would have been almost induced to wonder that the indignant fire which flashed from his eyes, did not melt the glasses of his spectacles — so majestic was his wrath. His nostrils dilated, and his fists clenched involuntarily, as he heard himself addressed by the villain. But he restrained himself again — he did *not* pulverize him.

"Here," continued the hardened traitor, tossing the license at Mr. Pickwick's feet; "get the name altered — take home the lady — do for Tuppy."

Mr. Pickwick was a philosopher, but philosophers are only men in armor, after all. The shaft had reached

him, penetrated through his philosophical harness to his very heart. In the frenzy of his rage, he hurled the inkstand madly forward, and followed it up himself. But Mr. Jingle had disappeared, and he found himself caught in the arms of Sam.

"Hallo," said that eccentric functionary, "furniter's cheap were you come from, sir. Self-acting ink, that 'ere; it's wrote your mark upon the wall, old gen'lm'n. Hold still, sir: wot's the use o' runnin' arter a man as has made his lucky, and got to t'other end of the Borough by this time?"

Mr. Pickwick's mind, like those of all truly great men, was open to conviction. He was a quick and powerful reasoner; and a moment's reflection suffered to remind him of the impotency of his rage. It subsided as quickly as it had been roused. He panted for breath, and looked benignantly round upon his friends.

Shall we tell the lamentations that ensued, when Miss Wardle found herself deserted by the faithless Jingle? Shall we extract Mr. Pickwick's masterly description of that heart-rending scene? His note-book, blotted with the tears of sympathizing humanity, lies open before us; one word, and it is in the printer's hands. But, no! we will be resolute! We will not wring the public bosom with the delineation of such suffering!

Slowly and sadly did the two friends and the deserted lady return next day in the Muggleton heavy coach. Dimly and darkly had the sombre shadows of a summer's night fallen upon all around, when they again reached Dingley Dell, and stood within the entrance to Manor Farm.

CHAPTER XI.

INVOLVING ANOTHER JOURNEY, AND AN ANTIQUARIAN DISCOVERY. RECORDING MR. PICKWICK'S DETERMINATION TO BE PRESENT AT AN ELECTION; AND CONTAINING A MANUSCRIPT OF THE OLD CLERGYMAN'S.

A NIGHT of quiet and repose in the profound silence of Dingley Dell, and an hour's breathing of its fresh and fragrant air on the ensuing morning, completely recovered Mr. Pickwick from the effects of his late fatigue of body and anxiety of mind. That illustrious man had been separated from his friends and followers for two whole days; and it was with a degree of pleasure and delight, which no common imagination can adequately conceive, that he stepped forward to greet Mr. Winkle and Mr. Snodgrass, as he encountered those gentlemen on his return from his early walk. The pleasure was mutual; for who could ever gaze on Mr. Pickwick's beaming face without experiencing the sensation? But still a cloud seemed to hang over his companions which that great man could not but be sensible of, and was wholly at a loss to account for. There was a mysterious air about them both, as unusual as it was alarming.

"And how," said Mr. Pickwick, when he had grasped

his followers by the hand, and exchanged warm salutations of welcome; "how is Tupman?"

Mr. Winkle, to whom the question was more peculiarly addressed, made no reply. He turned away his head, and appeared absorbed in melancholy reflection.

"Snodgrass," said Mr. Pickwick, earnestly, "How is our friend — he is not ill?"

"No," replied Mr. Snodgrass; and a tear trembled on his sentimental eyelid, like a rain-drop on a window-frame. "No; he is not ill."

Mr. Pickwick stopped, and gazed on each of his friends in turn.

"Winkle — Snodgrass," said Mr. Pickwick: "what does this mean? Where is our friend? What has happened? Speak — I conjure, I entreat — nay, I command you, speak."

There was a solemnity — a dignity — in Mr. Pickwick's manner, not to be withstood.

"He is gone," said Mr. Snodgrass.

"Gone!" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick, "Gone!"

"Gone," repeated Mr. Snodgrass.

"Where?" ejaculated Mr. Pickwick.

"We can only guess from that communication," replied Mr. Snodgrass, taking a letter from his pocket, and placing it in his friend's hand. "Yesterday morning, when a letter was received from Mr. Wardle, stating that you would be home with his sister at night, the melancholy which had hung over our friend during the whole of the previous day, was observed to increase. He shortly afterwards disappeared; he was missing during the whole day, and in the evening this letter was brought by the hostler from the Crown, at Muggleton. It had been left in his charge in the morning,

with a strict injunction that it should not be delivered until night."

Mr. Pickwick opened the epistle. It was in his friend's handwriting, and these were its contents: —

"My dear Pickwick,

"You, my dear friend, are placed far beyond the reach of many mortal frailties and weaknesses which ordinary people cannot overcome. You do not know what it is, at one blow, to be deserted by a lovely and fascinating creature, and to fall a victim to the artifices of a villain, who hid the grin of cunning beneath the mask of friendship. I hope you never may.

"Any letter, addressed to me at the Leather Bottle, Cobham, Kent, will be forwarded — supposing I still exist. I hasten from the sight of that world, which has become odious to me. Should I hasten from it altogether, pity — forgive me. Life, my dear Pickwick, has become insupportable to me. The spirit which burns within us, is a porter's knot, on which to rest the heavy load of worldly cares and troubles; and when that spirit fails us, the burden is too heavy to be borne. We sink beneath it. You may tell Rachael — Ah, that name! —

"Tracy Tupman."

"We must leave this place, directly," said Mr. Pickwick, as he refolded the note. "It would not have been decent for us to remain here, under any circumstances, after what has happened; and now we are bound to follow in search of our friend." And so saying, he led the way to the house.

His intention was rapidly communicated. The en-

treaties to remain were pressing, but Mr. Pickwick was inflexible. Business, he said, required his immediate attendance.

The old clergyman was present.

"You are not really going?" said he, taking Mr. Pickwick aside.

Mr. Pickwick reiterated his former determination.

"Then here," said the old gentleman, "is a little manuscript, which I had hoped to have the pleasure of reading to you myself. I found it on the death of a friend of mine — a medical man, engaged in our County Lunatic Asylum — among a variety of papers, which I had the option of destroying or preserving, as I thought proper. I can hardly believe that the manuscript is genuine, though it certainly is not in my friend's hand. However, whether it be the genuine production of a maniac, or founded upon the ravings of some unhappy being, which I think more probable, read it, and judge for yourself."

Mr. Pickwick received the manuscript, and parted from the benevolent old gentleman with many expressions of good-will and esteem.

It was a more difficult task to take leave of the inmates of Manor Farm, from whom they had received so much hospitality and kindness. Mr. Pickwick kissed the young ladies — we were going to say, as if they were his own daughters, only as he might possibly have infused a little more warmth into the salutation, the comparison would not be quite appropriate — hugged the old lady with filial cordiality: and patted the rosy cheeks of the female servants in a most patriarchal manner, as he slipped into the hands of each, some more substantial expressions of his approval. The exchange of cordialities with their fine old host and Mr. Trundle, were even

more hearty and prolonged; and it was not until Mr. Snodgrass had been several times called for, and at last emerged from a dark passage followed soon after by Emily (whose bright eyes looked unusually dim) that the three friends were enabled to tear themselves from their friendly entertainers. Many a backward look they gave at the Farm, as they walked slowly away: and many a kiss did Mr. Snodgrass waft in the air, in acknowledgment of something very like a lady's handkerchief, which was waved from one of the upper windows, until a turn of the lane hid the old house from their sight.

At Muggleton they procured a conveyance to Rochester. By the time they reached the last-named place, the violence of their grief had sufficiently abated to admit of their making a very excellent early dinner; and having procured the necessary information relative to the road, the three friends set forward again in the afternoon to walk to Cobham.

A delightful walk it was: for it was a pleasant afternoon in June, and their way lay through a deep and shady wood, cooled by the light wind which gently rustled the thick foliage, and enlivened by the songs of the birds that perched upon the boughs. The ivy and the moss crept in thick clusters over the old trees, and the soft green turf overspread the ground like a silken mat. They emerged upon an open park, with an ancient hall, displaying the quaint and picturesque architecture of Elizabeth's time. Long vistas of stately oaks and elm-trees appeared on every side: large herds of deer were cropping the fresh grass; and occasionally a startled hare scoured along the ground, with the speed of the shadows thrown by the light clouds which sweep across a sunny landscape like a passing breath of summer.

"If this," said Mr. Pickwick, looking about him; "if this were the place to which all who are troubled with our friend's complaint came, I fancy their old attachment to this world would very soon return."

"I think so too," said Mr. Winkle.

"And really," added Mr. Pickwick, after half an hour's walking had brought them to the village, "really for a misanthrope's choice, this is one of the prettiest and most desirable places of residence, I ever met with."

In this opinion also, both Mr. Winkle and Mr. Snodgrass expressed their concurrence; and having been directed to the Leather Bottle, a clean and commodious village ale-house, the three travellers entered, and at once inquired for a gentleman of the name of Tupman.

"Show the gentlemen into the parlor, Tom," said the landlady.

A stout country lad opened a door at the end of the passage, and the three friends entered a long, low-roofed room, furnished with a large number of high-backed leather-cushioned chairs, of fantastic shapes, and embellished with a great variety of old portraits and roughly-colored prints of some antiquity. At the upper end of the room was a table, with a white cloth upon it, well-covered with a roast fowl, bacon, ale, and et ceteras; and at the table sat Mr. Tupman, looking as unlike a man who had taken his leave of the world, as possible.

On the entrance of his friends, that gentleman laid down his knife and fork, and with a mournful air advanced to meet them.

"I did not expect to see you here," he said, as he grasped Mr. Pickwick's hand. "It's very kind."

"Ah!" said Mr. Pickwick, sitting down, and wiping from his forehead the perspiration which the walk had

engendered. "Finish your dinner, and walk out with me. I wish to speak to you alone."

Mr. Tupman did as he was desired; and Mr. Pickwick having refreshed himself with a copious draught of ale, waited his friend's leisure. The dinner was quickly despatched, and they walked out together.

For half an hour, their forms might have been seen pacing the church-yard to and fro, while Mr. Pickwick was engaged in combating his companion's resolution. Any repetition of his arguments would be useless; for what language could convey to them that energy and force which their great originator's manner communicated? Whether Mr. Tupman was already tired of retirement, or whether he was wholly unable to resist the eloquent appeal which was made to him, matters not, he did *not* resist it at last.

"It mattered little to him," he said, "where he dragged out the miserable remainder of his days: and since his friend laid so much stress upon his humble companionship, he was willing to share his adventures."

Mr. Pickwick smiled; they shook hands; and walked back to rejoin their companions.

It was at this moment that Mr. Pickwick made that immortal discovery, which has been the pride and boast of his friends, and the envy of every antiquarian in this or any other country. They had passed the door of their inn, and walked a little way down the village, before they recollected the precise spot in which it stood. As they turned back, Mr. Pickwick's eye fell upon a small broken stone, partially buried in the ground, in front of a cottage-door. He paused.

"This is very strange," said Mr. Pickwick.

"What is strange?" inquired Mr. Tupman, staring

eagerly at every object near him, but the right one. "God bless me, what's the matter?"

This last was an ejaculation of irrepressible astonishment, occasioned by seeing Mr. Pickwick, in his enthusiasm for discovery, fall on his knees before the little stone, and commence wiping the dust off it with his pocket-handkerchief.

"There is an inscription here," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Is it possible?" said Mr. Tupman.

"I can discern," continued Mr. Pickwick, rubbing away with all his might, and gazing intently through his spectacles: "I can discern a cross, and a B, and then a T. This is important," continued Mr. Pickwick, starting up. "This is some very old inscription, existing perhaps long before the ancient alms-houses in this place. It must not be lost."

He tapped at the cottage-door. A laboring man opened it.

"Do you know how this stone came here, my friend?" inquired the benevolent Mr. Pickwick.

"No, I doan't, sir," replied the man civilly. "It was here long afore I war born, or any on us."

Mr. Pickwick glanced triumphantly at his companion.

"You — you — are not particularly attached to it, I dare say," said Mr. Pickwick, trembling with anxiety. "You wouldn't mind selling it, now?"

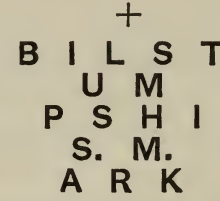
"Ah! but who'd buy it?" inquired the man, with an expression of face which he probably meant to be very cunning.

"I'll give you ten shillings for it, at once," said Mr. Pickwick, "if you would take it up for me."

The astonishment of the village may be easily imag-

ined, when (the little stone having been raised with one wrench of a spade) Mr. Pickwick, by dint of great personal exertion, bore it with his own hands to the inn, and after having carefully washed it, deposited it on the table.

The exultation and joy of the Pickwickians knew no bounds when their patience and assiduity, their washing and scraping, were crowned with success. The stone was uneven and broken, and the letters were straggling and irregular, but the following fragment of an inscription was clearly to be deciphered:



Mr. Pickwick's eyes sparkled with delight, as he sat and gloated over the treasure he had discovered. He had attained one of the greatest objects of his ambition. In a county known to abound in remains of the early ages; in a village in which there still existed some memorials of the olden time, he — he, the Chairman of the Pickwick Club — had discovered a strange and curious inscription of unquestionable antiquity, which had wholly escaped the observation of the many learned men who had preceded him. He could hardly trust the evidence of his senses.

"This — this," said he, "determines me. We return to town to-morrow."

"To-morrow!" exclaimed his admiring followers.

"To-morrow," said Mr. Pickwick. "This treasure must be at once deposited where it can be thoroughly

investigated, and properly understood. I have another reason for this step. In a few days, an election is to take place for the borough of Eatanswill, at which Mr. Perker, a gentleman whom I lately met, is the agent of one of the candidates. We will behold, and minutely examine, a scene so interesting to every Englishman."

"We will," was the animated cry of three voices.

Mr. Pickwick looked round him. The attachment and fervor of his followers lighted up a glow of enthusiasm within him. He was their leader, and he felt it.

"Let us celebrate this happy meeting with a convivial glass," said he. This proposition, like the other, was received with unanimous applause. And having himself deposited the important stone in a small deal box, purchased from the landlady for the purpose, he placed himself in an arm-chair at the head of the table; and the evening was devoted to festivity and conversation.

It was past eleven o'clock — a late hour for the little village of Cobham — when Mr. Pickwick retired to the bedroom which had been prepared for his reception. He threw open the lattice-window, and setting his light upon the table, fell into a train of meditation on the hurried events of the two preceding days.

The hour and the place were both favorable to contemplation; Mr. Pickwick was roused by the church clock striking twelve. The first stroke of the hour sounded solemnly in his ear; but when the bell ceased, the stillness seemed insupportable; — he almost felt as if he had lost a companion. He was nervous and excited; and hastily undressing himself, and placing his light in the chimney, got into bed.

Every one has experienced that disagreeable state of mind, in which a sensation of bodily weariness in vain contends against an inability to sleep. It was Mr. Pickwick's condition at this moment: he tossed first on one side and then on the other; and perseveringly closed his eyes as if to coax himself to slumber. It was of no use. Whether it was the unwonted exertion he had undergone, or the heat, or the brandy and water, or the strange bed, — whatever it was, his thoughts kept reverting very uncomfortably to the grim pictures down-stairs, and the old stories to which they had given rise in the course of the evening. After half an hour's tumbling about, he came to the unsatisfactory conclusion, that it was of no use trying to sleep; so he got up and partially dressed himself. Anything, he thought, was better than lying there fancying all kinds of horrors. He looked out of the window — it was very dark. He walked about the room — it was very lonely.

He had taken a few turns from the door to the window, and from the window to the door, when the clergyman's manuscript for the first time entered his head. It was a good thought. If it failed to interest him, it might send him to sleep. He took it from his coat-pocket, and drawing a small table towards his bedside, trimmed the light, put on his spectacles, and composed himself to read. It was a strange handwriting, and the paper was much soiled and blotted. The title gave him a sudden start, too; and he could not avoid casting a wistful glance round the room. Reflecting on the absurdity of giving way to such feelings, however, he trimmed the light again, and read as follows:

A MADMAN'S MANUSCRIPT.

"Yes! — a madman's! How that word would have struck to my heart many years ago! How it would have roused the terror that used to come upon me sometimes; sending the blood hissing and tingling through my veins, till the cold dew of fear stood in large drops upon my skin, and my knees knocked together with fright! I like it now, though. It's a fine name. Show me the monarch whose angry frown was ever feared like the glare of a madman's eye — whose cord and axe were ever half so sure as a madman's gripe. Ho! ho! It's a grand thing to be mad! to be peeped at like a wild lion through the iron bars — to gnash one's teeth and howl, through the long still night, to the merry ring of a heavy chain — and to roll and twine among the straw, transported with such brave music. Hurrah for the madhouse! Oh, it's a rare place!

"I remember days when I was *afraid* of being mad; when I used to start from my sleep, and fall upon my knees, and pray to be spared from the curse of my race; when I rushed from the sight of merriment or happiness, to hide myself in some lonely place, and spend the weary hours in watching the progress of the fever that was to consume my brain. I knew that madness was mixed up with my very blood, and the marrow of my bones; that one generation had passed away without the pestilence appearing among them, and that I was the first in whom it would revive. I knew it *must* be so: that so it always had been, and so it ever would be: and when I cowered in some obscure corner of a crowded room, and saw men whisper, and point, and turn their eyes towards me, I

knew they were telling each other of the doomed madman; and I slunk away again to mope in solitude.

"I did this for years; long, long years they were. The nights here are long sometimes — very long; but they are nothing to the restless nights, and dreadful dreams, I had at that time. It makes me cold to remember them. Large dusky forms, with sly and jeering faces, crouched in the corners of the room, and bent over my bed at night, tempting me to madness. They told me in low whispers, that the floor of the old house in which my father's father died was stained with his own blood, shed by his own hand in raging madness. I drove my fingers into my ears, but they screamed into my head till the room rang with it, that in one generation before him the madness slumbered, but that his grandfather had lived for years with his hands fettered to the ground, to prevent his tearing himself to pieces. I knew they told the truth — I knew it well. I had found it out years before, though they had tried to keep it from me! Ha! ha! I was too cunning for them, madman as they thought me.

"At last it came upon me, and I wondered how I could ever have feared it. I could go into the world now, and laugh and shout with the best among them. I knew I was mad, but they did not even suspect it. How I used to hug myself with delight, when I thought of the fine trick I was playing them after their old pointing and leering, when I was not mad, but only dreading that I might one day become so! And how I used to laugh for joy, when I was alone, and thought how well I kept my secret, and how quickly my kind friends would have fallen from me, if they had known the truth. I could have screamed with ecstasy when I dined alone with

some fine roaring fellow, to think how pale he would have turned, and how fast he would have run, if he had known that the dear friend who sat close to him, sharpening a bright glittering knife, was a madman with all the power, and half the will, to plunge it in his heart. Oh, it was a merry life!

"Riches became mine, wealth poured in upon me, and I rioted in pleasures enhanced a thousand-fold to me by the consciousness of my well-kept secret. I inherited an estate. The law — the eagle-eyed law itself, had been deceived, and had handed over disputed thousands to a madman's hands. Where was the wit of the sharp-sighted men of sound mind? Where the dexterity of the lawyers, eager to discover a flaw? The madman's cunning had overreached them all.

"I had money. How I was courted! I spent it profusely. How I was praised! How those three proud overbearing brothers humbled themselves before me! The old white-headed father, too — such deference — such respect — such devoted friendship — why he worshipped me. The old man had a daughter, and the young men a sister; and all the five were poor. I was rich; and when I married the girl, I saw a smile of triumph play upon the faces of her needy relatives, as they thought of their well-planned scheme, and their fine prize. It was for me to smile. To smile! To laugh outright, and tear my hair, and roll upon the ground with shrieks of merriment. They little thought they had married her to a madman.

"Stay. If they had known it, would they have saved her? A sister's happiness against her husband's gold. The lightest feather I blow into the air, against the gay chain that ornaments my body!

"In one thing I was deceived with all my cunning. If I had not been mad — for though we madmen are sharp-witted enough, we get bewildered sometimes — I should have known that the girl would rather have been placed, stiff and cold in a dull leaden coffin, than borne an envied bride to my rich, glittering house. I should have known that her heart was with the dark-eyed boy whose name I once heard her breathe in her troubled sleep; and that she had been sacrificed to me, to relieve the poverty of the old white-headed man, and the haughty brothers.

"I don't remember forms or faces now, but I know the girl was beautiful. I *know* she was; for in the bright moonlight nights, when I start up from my sleep, and all is quiet about me, I see, standing still and motionless in one corner of this cell, a slight and wasted figure with long black hair, which streaming down her back, stirs with no earthly wind, and eyes that fix their gaze on me, and never wink or close. Hush! the blood chills at my heart as I write it down — that form is *hers;* the face is very pale, and the eyes are glassy bright; but I know them well. That figure never moves; it never frowns and mouths as others do, that fill this place sometimes; but it is much more dreadful to me, even than the spirits that tempted me many years ago — it comes fresh from the grave; and is so very death-like.

"For nearly a year I saw that face grow paler; for nearly a year, I saw the tears steal down the mournful cheeks, and never knew the cause. I found it out at last, though. They could not keep it from me long. She had never liked me; I had never thought she did: she despised my wealth, and hated the splendor in which she lived; — I had not expected that. She loved another.

This I had never thought of. Strange feelings came over me, and thoughts forced upon me by some secret power, whirled round and round my brain. I did not hate her, though I hated the boy she still wept for. I pitied — yes, I pitied — the wretched life to which her cold and selfish relations had doomed her. I knew that she could not live long, but the thought that before her death she might give birth to some ill-fated being, destined to hand down madness to its offspring, determined me. I resolved to kill her.

"For many weeks I thought of poison, and then of drowning, and then of fire. A fine sight the grand house in flames, and the madman's wife smouldering away to cinders. Think of the jest of a large reward, too, and of some sane man swinging in the wind for a deed he never did, and all through a madman's cunning! I thought often of this, but I gave it up at last. Oh! the pleasure of stropping the razor day after day, feeling the sharp edge, and thinking of the gash one stroke of its thin bright edge would make!

"At last the old spirits who had been with me so often before whispered in my ear that the time was come, and thrust the open razor into my hand. I grasped it firmly, rose softly from the bed, and leaned over my sleeping wife. Her face was buried in her hands. I withdrew them softly, and they fell listlessly on her bosom. She had been weeping; for the traces of the tears were still wet upon her cheek. Her face was calm and placid; and even as I looked upon it, a tranquil smile lighted up her pale features. I laid my hand softly on her shoulder. She started — it was only a passing dream. I leant forward again. She screamed, and woke.

"One motion of my hand, and she would never again

have uttered cry or sound. But I was startled, and drew back. Her eyes were fixed on mine. I know not how it was, but they cowed and frightened me; and I quailed beneath them. She rose from the bed, still gazing fixedly and steadily on me. I trembled; the razor was in my hand, but I could not move. She made towards the door. As she neared it, she turned, and withdrew her eyes from my face. The spell was broken. I bounded forward, and clutched her by the arm. Uttering shriek upon shriek, she sunk upon the ground.

"Now I could have killed her without a struggle; but the house was alarmed. I heard the tread of footsteps on the stairs. I replaced the razor in its usual drawer, unfastened the door, and called loudly for assistance.

"They came, and raised her, and placed her on the bed. She lay bereft of animation for hours; and when life, look, and speech returned, her senses had deserted her, and she raved wildly and furiously.

"Doctors were called in — great men who rolled up to my door in easy carriages, with fine horses and gaudy servants. They were at her bedside for weeks. They had a great meeting, and consulted together in low and solemn voices in another room. One, the cleverest and most celebrated among them, took me aside, and bidding me prepare for the worst, told me — me, the madman! — that my wife was mad. He stood close beside me at an open window, his eyes looking in my face, and his hand laid upon my arm. With one effort, I could have hurled him into the street beneath. It would have been rare sport to have done it; but my secret was at stake, and I let him go. A few days after, they told me I must place her under some restraint: I must provide a keeper for her. *I!* I went into the open fields where none could

hear me, and laughed till the air resounded with my shouts!

"She died next day. The white-headed old man followed her to the grave, and the proud brothers dropped a tear over the insensible corpse of her whose sufferings they had regarded in her lifetime with muscles of iron. All this was food for my secret mirth, and I laughed behind the white handkerchief which I held up to my face, as we rode home, till the tears came into my eyes.

"But though I had carried my object, and killed her, I was restless and disturbed, and I felt that, before long, my secret must be known. I could not hide the wild mirth and joy which boiled within me, and made me, when I was alone at home, jump up and beat my hands together, and dance round and round, and roar aloud. When I went out, and saw the busy crowds hurrying about the streets; or to the theatre, and heard the sound of music, and beheld the people dancing, I felt such glee, that I could have rushed among them, and torn them to pieces limb from limb, and howled in transport. But I ground my teeth, and struck my feet upon the floor, and drove my sharp nails into my hands. I kept it down; and no one knew I was a madman yet.

"I remember—though it's one of the last things I *can* remember — for now I mix realities with my dreams, and having so much to do, and being always hurried here, have no time to separate the two, from some strange confusion in which they get involved — I remember how I let it out at last. Ha! ha! I think I see their frightened looks now, and feel the ease with which I flung them from me, and dashed my clenched fist into their white faces, and then flew like the wind, and left them screaming and shouting far behind. The strength of a giant comes

upon me when I think of it. There — see how this iron bar bends beneath my furious wrench. I could snap it like a twig, only there are long galleries here with many doors — I don't think I could find my way along them: and even if I could, I know there are iron gates below which they keep locked and barred. They know what a clever madman I have been, and they are proud to have me here, to show.

"Let me see; — yes, I had been out. It was late at night when I reached home, and found the proudest of the three proud brothers waiting to see me — urgent business he said: I recollect it well. I hated that man with all a madman's hate. Many and many a time had my fingers longed to tear him. They told me he was there. I ran swiftly up-stairs. He had a word to say to me. I dismissed the servants. It was late, and we were alone together — *for the first time.*

"I kept my eyes carefully from him at first, for I knew what he little thought — and I gloried in the knowledge — that the light of madness gleamed from them like fire. We sat in silence for a few minutes. He spoke at last. My recent dissipation, and strange remarks, made so soon after his sister's death, were an insult to her memory. Coupling together many circumstances which had at first escaped his observation, he thought I had not treated her well. He wished to know whether he was right in inferring that I meant to cast a reproach upon her memory, and a disrespect upon her family. It was due to the uniform he wore to demand this explanation.

"This man had a commission in the army — a commission purchased with my money, and his sister's misery! This was the man who had been foremost in the plot to ensnare me, and grasp my wealth. This was the

man who had been the main instrument in forcing his sister to wed me; well knowing that her heart had been given to that puling boy. Due! Due to *his* uniform! The livery of his degradation! I turned my eyes upon him — I could not help it — but I spoke not a word.

"I saw the sudden change that came upon him beneath my gaze. He was a bold man, but the color faded from his face, and he drew back his chair. I dragged mine nearer to him; and as I laughed — I was very merry then — I saw him shudder. I felt the madness rising within me. He was afraid of me.

"'You were very fond of your sister when she was alive' — I said — 'Very.'

"He looked uneasily round him, and I saw his hand grasp the back of his chair: but he said nothing.

"'You villain,' said I, 'I found you out; I discovered your hellish plots against me; I know her heart was fixed on some one else before you compelled her to marry me. I know it — I know it.'

"He jumped suddenly from his chair, brandished it aloft, and bid me stand back — for I took care to be getting closer to him, all the time I spoke.

"I screamed rather than talked, for I felt tumultuous passions eddying through my veins, and the old spirits whispering and taunting me to tear his heart out.

"'Damn you,' said I, starting up, and rushing upon him; 'I killed her. I am a madman. Down with you. Blood, blood! I will have it!'

"I turned aside with one blow the chair he hurled at me in his terror, and closed with him; and with a heavy crash, we rolled upon the floor together.

"It was a fine struggle that; for he was a tall strong

man, fighting for his life; and I a powerful madman, thirsting to destroy him. I knew no strength could equal mine, and I was right. Right again, though a madman! His struggles grew fainter. I knelt upon his chest, and clasped his brawny throat firmly with both hands. His face grew purple; his eyes were starting from his head, and with protruded tongue, he seemed to mock me. I squeezed the tighter.

"The door was suddenly burst open with a loud noise, and a crowd of people rushed forward, crying aloud to each other to secure the madman.

"My secret was out; and my only struggle now was for liberty and freedom. I gained my feet before a hand was on me, threw myself among my assailants, and cleared my way with my strong arm as if I bore a hatchet in my hand and hewed them down before me. I gained the door, dropped over the banisters, and in an instant was in the street.

"Straight and swift I ran, and no one dared to stop me. I heard the noise of feet behind, and redoubled my speed. It grew fainter and fainter in the distance, and at length died away altogether: but on I bounded, through marsh and rivulet, over fence and wall, with a wild shout which was taken up by the strange beings that flocked around me on every side, and swelled the sound, till it pierced the air. I was borne upon the arms of demons who swept along upon the wind, and bore down bank and hedge before them, and spun me round and round with a rustle and a speed that made my head swim, until at last they threw me from them with a violent shock, and I fell heavily upon the earth. When I woke, I found myself here — here in this gay cell, where the sunlight seldom comes, and the moon steals in in rays

which only serve to show the dark shadows about me, and that silent figure in its old corner. When I lie awake, I can sometimes hear strange shrieks and cries from distant parts of this large place. What they are, I know not; but they neither come from that pale form, nor does it regard them. For from the first shades of dusk till the earliest light of morning, it still stands motionless in the same place, listening to the music of my iron chain, and watching my gambols on my straw bed."

At the end of the manuscript was written, in another hand, this note:—

[The unhappy man whose ravings are recorded above, was a melancholy instance of the baneful results of energies misdirected in early life, and excesses prolonged until their consequences could never be repaired. The thoughtless riot, dissipation, and debauchery of his younger days, produced fever and delirium. The first effects of the latter was the strange delusion, founded upon a well-known medical theory, strongly contended for by some, and as strongly contested by others, that an hereditary madness existed in his family. This produced a settled gloom, which in time developed a morbid insanity, and finally terminated in raving madness. There is every reason to believe that the events he detailed, though distorted in the description by his diseased imagination, really happened. It is only matter of wonder to those who were acquainted with the vices of his early career, that his passions, when no longer controlled by reason, did not lead him to the commission of still more frightful deeds.]

Mr. Pickwick's candle was just expiring in the socket, as he concluded the perusal of the old clergyman's manuscript; and when the light went suddenly out, without

any previous flicker by way of warning, it communicated a very considerable start to his excited frame. Hastily throwing off such articles of clothing as he had put on when he rose from his uneasy bed, and casting a fearful glance around, he once more scrambled hastily between the sheets, and soon fell fast asleep.

The sun was shining brilliantly into his chamber when he awoke, and the morning was far advanced. The gloom which had oppressed him on the previous night, had disappeared with the dark shadows which shrouded the landscape, and his thoughts and his feelings were as light and gay as the morning itself. After a hearty breakfast, the four gentlemen sallied forth to walk to Gravesend, followed by a man bearing the stone in its deal box. They reached that town about one o'clock, (their luggage they had directed to be forwarded to the City, from Rochester,) and being fortunate enough to secure places on the outside of a coach, arrived in London in sound health and spirits, on that same afternoon.

The next three or four days were occupied with the preparations which were necessary for their journey to the borough of Eatanswill. As any reference to that most important undertaking demands a separate chapter, we may devote the few lines which remain at the close of this, to narrate, with great brevity, the history of the antiquarian discovery.

It appears from the Transactions of the Club, then, that Mr. Pickwick lectured upon the discovery at a General Club Meeting, convened on the night succeeding their return, and entered into a variety of ingenious and erudite speculations on the meaning of the inscription. It also appears that a skilful artist executed a faithful delineation of the curiosity, which was engraven on stone,

and presented to the Royal Antiquarian Society, and other learned bodies, — that heart-burnings and jealousies without number, were created by rival controversies which were penned upon the subject — and that Mr. Pickwick himself wrote a Pamphlet, containing ninety-six pages of very small print, and twenty-seven different readings of the inscription. That three old gentlemen cut off their eldest sons with a shilling-a-piece for presuming to doubt the antiquity of the fragment — and that one enthusiastic individual cut himself off prematurely, in despair at being unable to fathom its meaning. That Mr. Pickwick was elected an honorary member of seventeen native and foreign societies, for making the discovery; that none of the seventeen could make anything of it, but that all the seventeen agreed it was very extraordinary.

Mr. Blotton, indeed — and the name will be doomed to the undying contempt of those who cultivate the mysterious and the sublime — Mr. Blotton, we say, with the doubt and cavilling peculiar to vulgar minds, presumed to state a view of the case, as degrading as ridiculous. Mr. Blotton, with a mean desire to tarnish the lustre of the immortal name of Pickwick, actually undertook a journey to Cobham in person, and on his return, sarcastically observed in an oration at the club, that he had seen the man from whom the stone was purchased; that the man presumed the stone to be ancient, but solemnly denied the antiquity of the inscription — inasmuch as he represented it to have been rudely carved by himself in an idle mood, and to display letters intended to bear neither more nor less than the simple construction of "Bill Stumps, his mark:" and that Mr. Stumps, being

little in the habit of original composition, and more accustomed to be guided by the sound of words than by the strict rules of orthography, had omitted the concluding "L" of his Christian name.

The Pickwick Club, as might have been expected from so enlightened an Institution, received this statement with the contempt it deserved, expelled the presumptuous and ill-conditioned Blotton from the society, and voted Mr. Pickwick a pair of gold spectacles, in token of their confidence and approbation; in return for which, Mr. Pickwick caused a portrait of himself to be painted, and hung up in the club-room — which portrait, by the by, he did not wish to have destroyed when he grew a few years older.

Mr. Blotton was ejected but not conquered. He also wrote a pamphlet, addressed to the seventeen learned societies, containing a repetition of the statement he had already made, and rather more than half intimating his opinion that the seventeen learned societies aforesaid, were so many "humbugs." Hereupon the virtuous indignation of the seventeen learned societies being roused, several fresh pamphlets appeared; the foreign learned societies corresponded with the native learned societies, the native learned societies translated the pamphlets of the foreign learned societies into English, the foreign learned societies translated the pamphlets of the native learned societies into all sorts of languages; and thus commenced that celebrated scientific discussion so well known to all men, as the Pickwick controversy.

But this base attempt to injure Mr. Pickwick, recoiled upon the head of its calumnious author. The seventeen

learned societies unanimously voted the presumptuous Blotton an ignorant meddler, and forthwith set to work upon more treatises than ever. And to this day the stone remains, an illegible monument of Mr. Pickwick's greatness, and a lasting trophy to the littleness of his enemies.

CHAPTER XII.

DESCRIPTIVE OF A VERY IMPORTANT PROCEEDING ON THE PART OF MR. PICKWICK; NO LESS AN EPOCH IN HIS LIFE, THAN IN THIS HISTORY.

Mr. Pickwick's apartments in Goswell Street, although on a limited scale, were not only of a very neat and comfortable description, but peculiarly adapted for the residence of a man of his genius and observation. His sitting-room was the first-floor front, his bedroom the second floor front; and thus, whether he were sitting at his desk in the parlor, or standing before the dressing-glass in his dormitory, he had an equal opportunity of contemplating human nature in all the numerous phases it exhibits, in that not more populous than popular thoroughfare. His landlady, Mrs. Bardell — the relict and sole executrix of a deceased custom-house officer — was a comely woman of bustling manners and agreeable appearance, with a natural genius for cooking, improved by study and long practice into an exquisite talent. There were no children, no servants, no fowls. The only other inmates of the house were a large man, and a small boy; the first a lodger, the second a production of Mrs. Bardell's. The large man was always home precisely at ten o'clock at night, at which hour he regularly condensed himself into the limits of a dwarfish French bedstead in the back-parlor; and the infantine sports

and gymnastic exercises of Master Bardell were exclusively confined to the neighboring pavements and gutters. Cleanliness and quiet reigned throughout the house; and in it Mr. Pickwick's will was law.

To any one acquainted with these points of the domestic economy of the establishment, and conversant with the admirable regulation of Mr. Pickwick's mind, his appearance and behavior on the morning previous to that which had been fixed upon for the journey to Eatanswill, would have been most mysterious and unaccountable. He paced the room to and fro with hurried steps, popped his head out of the window at intervals of about three minutes each, constantly referred to his watch, and exhibited many other manifestations of impatience, very unusual with him. It was evident that something of great importance was in contemplation, but what that something was not even Mrs. Bardell herself had been enabled to discover.

"Mrs. Bardell," said Mr. Pickwick, at last, as that amiable female approached the termination of a prolonged dusting of the apartment —

"Sir," said Mrs. Bardell.

"Your little boy is a very long time gone."

"Why it's a good long way to the Borough, sir," remonstrated Mrs. Bardell.

"Ah," said Mr. Pickwick, "very true; so it is."

Mr. Pickwick relapsed into silence, and Mrs. Bardell resumed her dusting.

"Mrs. Bardell," said Mr. Pickwick, at the expiration of a few minutes.

"Sir," said Mrs. Bardell again.

"Do you think it's a much greater expense to keep two people, than to keep one?"

"La, Mr. Pickwick," said Mrs. Bardell, coloring up to the very border of her cap, as she fancied she observed a species of matrimonial twinkle in the eyes of her lodger; "La, Mr. Pickwick, what a question!"

"Well, but *do* you?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"That depends" — said Mrs. Bardell, approaching the duster very near to Mr. Pickwick's elbow, which was planted on the table — "that depends a good deal upon the person, you know, Mr. Pickwick; and whether it's a saving and careful person, sir."

"That's very true," said Mr. Pickwick, "but the person I have in my eye (here he looked very hard at Mrs. Bardell) I think possesses these qualities; and has, moreover, a considerable knowledge of the world, and a great deal of sharpness, Mrs. Bardell; which may be of material use to me."

"La, Mr. Pickwick," said Mrs. Bardell; the crimson rising to her cap-border again.

"I do," said Mr. Pickwick, growing energetic, as was his wont in speaking of a subject which interested him, "I do, indeed; and to tell you the truth, Mrs. Bardell, I have made up my mind."

"Dear me, sir," exclaimed Mrs. Bardell.

"You'll think it very strange now," said the amiable Mr. Pickwick, with a good-humored glance at his companion, "that I never consulted you about this matter, and never even mentioned it, till I sent your little boy out this morning — eh?"

Mrs. Bardell could only reply by a look. She had long worshipped Mr. Pickwick at a distance, but here she was, all at once, raised to a pinnacle to which her wildest and most extravagant hopes had never dared to aspire. Mr. Pickwick was going to propose — a delib-

erate plan, too — sent her little boy to the Borough, to get him out of the way — how thoughtful — how considerate!

"Well," said Mr. Pickwick, "What do you think?"

"Oh, Mr. Pickwick," said Mrs. Bardell, trembling with agitation, "you're very kind, sir."

"It'll save you a good deal of trouble, won't it?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Oh, I never thought anything of the trouble, sir," replied Mrs. Bardell; "and of course I shall take more trouble to please you then, than ever; but it is so kind of you, Mr. Pickwick, to have so much consideration for my loneliness."

"Ah, to be sure," said Mr. Pickwick; "I never thought of that. When I am in town, you'll always have somebody to sit with you. To be sure, so you will."

"I'm sure I ought to be a very happy woman," said Mrs. Bardell.

"And your little boy" — said Mr. Pickwick.

"Bless his heart," interposed Mrs. Bardell with a maternal sob.

"He, too, will have a companion," resumed Mr. Pickwick, "a lively one, who'll teach him, I'll be bound, more tricks in a week than he would ever learn in a year." And Mr. Pickwick smiled placidly.

"Oh you dear" — said Mrs. Bardell.

Mr. Pickwick started.

"Oh you kind, good, playful dear," said Mrs. Bardell; and without more ado, she rose from her chair, and flung her arms round Mr. Pickwick's neck, with a cataract of tears and a chorus of sobs.

"Bless my soul," cried the astonished Mr. Pickwick;

—"Mrs. Bardell my good woman — dear me, what a situation — pray consider. — Mrs. Bardell, don't — if anybody should come" —

"Oh, let them come," exclaimed Mrs. Bardell, frantically; "I'll never leave you — dear, kind, good soul;" and with these words Mrs. Bardell clung the tighter.

"Mercy upon me," said Mr. Pickwick, struggling violently, "I hear somebody coming up the stairs. Don't, don't, there's a good creature, don't." But entreaty and remonstrance were alike unavailing: for Mrs. Bardell had fainted in Mr. Pickwick's arms; and before he could gain time to deposit her on a chair, Master Bardell entered the room, ushering in Mr. Tupman, Mr. Winkle, and Mr. Snodgrass.

Mr. Pickwick was struck motionless and speechless. He stood with his lovely burden in his arms, gazing vacantly on the countenances of his friends, without the slightest attempt at recognition or explanation. They, in their turn, stared at him; and Master Bardell, in his turn, stared at everybody.

The astonishment of the Pickwickians was so absorbing, and the perplexity of Mr. Pickwick was so extreme, that they might have remained in exactly the same relative situations until the suspended animation of the lady was restored, had it not been for a most beautiful and touching expression of filial affection on the part of her youthful son. Clad in a tight suit of corduroy, spangled with brass buttons of a very considerable size, he at first stood at the door astounded and uncertain; but by degrees, the impression that his mother must have suffered some personal damage, pervaded his partially developed mind, and considering Mr. Pickwick as the aggressor, he set up an appalling and semi-earthly

kind of howling, and butting forward with his head, commenced assailing that immortal gentleman about the back and legs, with such blows and pinches as the strength of his arm, and the violence of his excitement, allowed.

"Take this little villain away," said the agonized Mr. Pickwick, "he's mad."

"What *is* the matter?" said the three tongue-tied Pickwickians.

"I don't know," replied Mr. Pickwick, pettishly. "Take away the boy," — (here Mr. Winkle carried the interesting boy, screaming and struggling, to the farther end of the apartment). — "Now, help me, lead this woman down stairs."

"Oh, I am better now," said Mrs. Bardell, faintly.

"Let me lead you down stairs," said the ever gallant Mr. Tupman.

"Thank you, sir — thank you;" exclaimed Mrs. Bardell, hysterically. And down stairs she was led accordingly, accompanied by her affectionate son.

"I cannot conceive" — said Mr. Pickwick, when his friend returned —"I cannot conceive what has been the matter with that woman. I had merely announced to her my intention of keeping a man-servant, when she fell into the extraordinary paroxysm in which you found her. Very extraordinary thing."

"Very," said his three friends.

"Placed me in such an extremely awkward situation," continued Mr. Pickwick.

"Very," was the reply of his followers, as they coughed slightly, and looked dubiously at each other.

This behavior was not lost upon Mr. Pickwick. He remarked their incredulity. They evidently suspected him.

"There is a man in the passage now," said Mr. Tupman.

"It's the man I spoke to you about," said Mr. Pickwick. "I sent for him to the Borough this morning. Have the goodness to call him up, Snodgrass."

Mr. Snodgrass did as he was desired; and Mr. Samuel Weller forthwith presented himself.

"Oh — you remember me, I suppose?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"I should think so," replied Sam, with a patronizing wink. "Queer start that 'ere, but he was one too many for you, warn't he? Up to snuff and a pinch or two over — eh?"

"Never mind that matter now," said Mr. Pickwick, hastily, "I want to speak to you about something else. Sit down."

"Thank'ee, sir," said Sam. And down he sat without further bidding, having previously deposited his old white hat on the landing outside the door. "'Ta'n't a werry good 'un to look at," said Sam, "but it's an astonishin' 'un to wear; and afore the brim went, it was a werry handsome tile. Hows'ever it's lighter without it, that's one thing, and every hole lets in some air, that's another — wentilation gossamer I calls it." On the delivery of this sentiment, Mr. Weller smiled agreeably upon the assembled Pickwickians.

"Now, with regard to the matter on which I, with the concurrence of these gentlemen, sent for you," said Mr. Pickwick.

"That's the p'int, sir," interposed Sam; "out vith it, as the father said to the child, wen he swallowed a farden."

"We want to know, in the first place," said Mr. Pick-

wick, "whether you have any reason to be discontented with your present situation."

"Afore I answers that 'ere question, gen'lm'n," replied Mr. Weller, "*I* should like to know, in the first place, whether you're a goin' to purwide me with a better."

A sunbeam of placid benevolence played on Mr. Pickwick's features as he said, "I have half made up my mind to engage you myself."

"Have you, though?" said Sam.

Mr. Pickwick nodded in the affirmative.

"Wages?" inquired Sam.

"Twelve pounds a year," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"Clothes?"

"Two suits."

"Work?"

"To attend upon me; and travel about with me and these gentlemen here."

"Take the bill down," said Sam, emphatically. "I'm let to a single gentleman, and the terms is agreed upon."

"You accept the situation?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"Cert'nly," replied Sam. "If the clothes fits me half as well as the place, they'll do."

"You can get a character of course?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Ask the landlady o' the White Hart about that, sir," replied Sam.

"Can you come this evening?"

"I'll get into the clothes this minute, if they're here," said Sam with great alacrity.

"Call at eight this evening," said Mr. Pickwick; "and if the inquiries are satisfactory, they shall be provided."

With the single exception of one amiable indiscretion, in which an assistant housemaid had equally partici-

pated, the history of Mr. Weller's conduct was so very blameless, that Mr. Pickwick felt fully justified in closing the engagement that very evening. With the promptness and energy which characterized not only the public proceedings, but all the private actions of this extraordinary man, he at once led his new attendant to one of those convenient emporiums where gentlemen's new and second-hand clothes are provided, and the troublesome and inconvenient formality of measurement dispensed with; and before night had closed in, Mr. Weller was furnished with a gray coat with the 'P. C.' button, a black hat with a cockade to it, a pink striped waistcoat, light breeches and gaiters, and a variety of other necessaries, too numerous to recapitulate.

"Well," said that suddenly transformed individual, as he took his seat on the outside of the Eatanswill coach next morning: "I wonder wether I'm meant to be a footman, or a groom, or a gamekeeper, or a seedsman. I looks like a sort of compo of every one on 'em. Never mind; there's change of air, plenty to see, and little to do; and all this suits my complaint uncommon; so long life to the Pickvicks, says I!"

CHAPTER XIII.

SOME ACCOUNT OF EATANSWILL; OF THE STATE OF PARTIES THEREIN; AND OF THE ELECTION OF A MEMBER TO SERVE IN PARLIAMENT FOR THAT ANCIENT, LOYAL, AND PATRIOTIC BOROUGH.

We will frankly acknowledge, that up to the period of our being first immersed in the voluminous papers of the Pickwick club, we had never heard of Eatanswill; we will with equal candor admit, that we have in vain searched for proof of the actual existence of such a place at the present day. Knowing the deep reliance to be placed on every note and statement of Mr. Pickwick's, and not presuming to set up our recollection against the recorded declarations of that great man, we have consulted every authority, bearing upon the subject, to which we could possibly refer. We have traced every name in schedules A and B, without meeting with that of Eatanswill; we have minutely examined every corner of the Pocket County Maps issued for the benefit of society by our distinguished publishers, and the same result has attended our investigation. We are therefore led to believe, that Mr. Pickwick, with that anxious desire to abstain from giving offence to any, and with those delicate feelings for which all who knew him well know he was so eminently remarkable, purposely substituted a

fictitious designation, for the real name of the place in which his observations were made. We are confirmed in this belief by a little circumstance, apparently slight and trivial in itself, but when considered in this point of view, not undeserving of notice. In Mr. Pickwick's note-book, we can just trace an entry of the fact, that the places of himself and followers were booked by the Norwich coach; but this entry was afterwards lined through, as if for the purpose of concealing even the direction in which the borough is situated. We will not, therefore, hazard a guess upon the subject, but will at once proceed with this history; content with the materials which its characters have provided for us.

It appears, then, that the Eatanswill people, like the people of many other small towns, considered themselves of the utmost and most mighty importance, and that every man in Eatanswill, conscious of the weight that attached to his example, felt himself bound to unite, heart and soul, with one of the two great parties that divided the town — the Blues and the Buffs. Now the Blues lost no opportunity of opposing the Buffs, and the Buffs lost no opportunity of opposing the Blues; and the consequence was, that whenever the Buffs and Blues met together at public meeting, Town-Hall, fair, or market, disputes and high words arose between them. With these dissensions it is almost superfluous to say that everything in Eatanswill was made a party-question. If the Buffs proposed to new skylight the market-place, the Blues got up public meetings, and denounced the proceeding; if the Blues proposed the erection of an additional pump in the High Street, the Buffs rose as one man and stood aghast at the enormity. There were Blue shops and Buff shops, Blue inns and Buff inns; —

there was a Blue aisle and a Buff aisle in the very church itself.

Of course it was essentially and indispensably necessary that each of these powerful parties should have its chosen organ and representative: and, accordingly, there were two newspapers in the town — the Eatanswill Gazette and the Eatanswill Independent; the former advocating Blue principles, and the latter conducted on grounds decidedly Buff. Fine newspapers they were. Such leading articles, and such spirited attacks! — "Our worthless contemporary, the Gazette" — "That disgraceful and dastardly journal, the Independent" — "That false and scurrilous print, the Independent" — "That vile and slanderous calumniator, the Gazette;" — these, and other spirit-stirring denunciations were strewn plentifully over the columns of each, in every number, and excited feelings of the most intense delight and indignation in the bosoms of the towns-people.

Mr. Pickwick, with his usual foresight and sagacity, had chosen a peculiarly desirable moment for a visit to the borough. Never was such a contest known. The Honorable Samuel Slumkey, of Slumkey Hall, was the Blue candidate; and Horatio Fizkin, Esq., of Fizkin Lodge, near Eatanswill, had been prevailed upon by his friends to stand forward on the Buff interest. The Gazette warned the electors of Eatanswill that the eyes not only of England, but of the whole civilized world, were upon them; and the Independent imperatively demanded to know, whether the constituency of Eatanswill were the grand fellows they had always taken them for, or base and servile tools, undeserving alike of the name of Englishmen and the blessings of freedom. Never had such a commotion agitated the town before.

It was late in the evening, when Mr. Pickwick and his companions, assisted by Sam, dismounted from the roof of the Eatanswill coach. Large blue silk flags were flying from the windows of the Town Arms Inn, and bills were posted in every sash, intimating, in gigantic letters, that the honorable Samuel Slumkey's committee sat there daily. A crowd of idlers were assembled in the road, looking at a hoarse man in the balcony, who was apparently talking himself very red in the face in Mr. Slumkey's behalf; but the force and point of whose arguments were somewhat impaired by the perpetual beating of four large drums which Mr. Fizkin's committee had stationed at the street corner. There was a busy little man beside him, though, who took off his hat at intervals and motioned to the people to cheer, which they regularly did, most enthusiastically; and as the red-faced gentlemen went on talking till he was redder in the face than ever, it seemed to answer his purpose quite as well as if anybody had heard him.

The Pickwickians had no sooner dismounted, than they were surrounded by a branch mob of the honest and independent, who forthwith set up three deafening cheers, which being responded to by the main body (for it's not at all necessary for a crowd to know what they are cheering about) swelled into a tremendous roar of triumph, which stopped even the red-faced man in the balcony.

"Hurrah!" shouted the mob in conclusion.

"One cheer more," screamed the little fugleman in the balcony, and out shouted the mob again, as if lungs were cast-iron, with steel works.

"Slumkey forever!" roared the honest and independent.

"Slumkey forever!" echoed Mr. Pickwick, taking off his hat.

"No Fizkin!" roared the crowd.

"Certainly not!" shouted Mr. Pickwick.

"Hurrah!" And then there was another roaring, like that of a whole menagerie when the elephant has rung the bell for the cold meat.

"Who is Slumkey?" whispered Mr. Tupman.

"I don't know," replied Mr. Pickwick in the same tone. "Hush. Don't ask any questions. It's always best on these occasions to do what the mob do."

"But suppose there are two mobs?" suggested Mr. Snodgrass.

"Shout with the largest," replied Mr. Pickwick.

Volumes could not have said more.

They entered the house, the crowd opening right and left to let them pass, and cheering vociferously. The first object of consideration was to secure quarters for the night.

"Can we have beds here?" inquired Mr. Pickwick, summoning the waiter.

"Don't know, sir," replied the man; "afraid we're full, sir, — I'll inquire, sir." Away he went for that purpose, and presently returned, to ask whether the gentlemen were "Blue."

As neither Mr. Pickwick nor his companions took any vital interest in the cause of either candidate, the question was rather a difficult one to answer. In this dilemma Mr. Pickwick bethought himself of his new friend, Mr. Perker.

"Do you know a gentleman of the name of Perker?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"Certainly, sir; Honorable Mr. Samuel Slumkey's agent."

"He is Blue, I think?"

"Oh yes, sir."

"Then *we* are Blue," said Mr. Pickwick; but observing that the man looked rather doubtful at this accommodating announcement, he gave him his card, and desired him to present it to Mr. Perker forthwith, if he should happen to be in the house. The waiter retired; and reappearing almost immediately with a request that Mr. Pickwick would follow him, led the way to a large room on the first floor, where, seated at a long table covered with books and papers, was Mr. Perker.

"Ah — ah, my dear sir," said the little man, advancing to meet him; "very happy to see you, my dear sir, very. Pray sit down. So you have carried your intention into effect. You have come down here to see an election — eh?"

Mr. Pickwick replied in the affirmative.

"Spirited contest, my dear sir," said the little man.

"I am delighted to hear it," said Mr. Pickwick, rubbing his hands. "I like to see sturdy patriotism, on whatever side it is called forth; — and so it's a spirited contest?"

"Oh yes," said the little man, "very much so indeed. We have opened all the public-houses in the place, and left our adversary nothing but the beer-shops — masterly stroke of policy that, my dear sir, eh?" — and the little man smiled complacently, and took a large pinch of snuff.

"And what are the probabilities as to the result of the contest?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"Why doubtful, my dear sir; rather doubtful as yet," replied the little man. "Fizkin's people have got three-and-thirty voters in the lock-up coach-house at the White Hart."

"In the coach-house!" said Mr. Pickwick, considerably astonished by this second stroke of policy.

"They keep 'em locked up there, till they want 'em," resumed the little man. "The effect of that is, you see, to prevent our getting at them; and even if we could, it would be of no use, for they keep them very drunk on purpose. Smart fellow Fizkin's agent — very smart fellow indeed."

Mr. Pickwick stared, but said nothing.

"We are pretty confident, though," said Mr. Perker, sinking his voice almost to a whisper. "We had a little tea-party here, last night — five-and-forty women, my dear sir — and gave every one of 'em a green parasol when she went away."

"A parasol!" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Fact, my dear sir, fact. Five-and-forty green parasols, at seven and sixpence apiece. All women like finery, — extraordinary the effect of those parasols. Secured all their husbands, and half their brothers — beats stockings, and flannel, and all that sort of thing, hollow. My idea, my dear sir, entirely. Hail, rain, or sunshine, you can't walk half a dozen yards up the street without encountering half a dozen green parasols."

Here the little man indulged in a convulsion of mirth, which was only checked by the entrance of a third party.

This was a tall, thin man, with a sandy-colored head inclined to baldness, and a face in which solemn importance was blended with a look of unfathomable profundity. He was dressed in a long brown surtout, with a black cloth waistcoat, and drab trousers. A double eye-glass dangled at his waistcoat: and on his head he wore a very low-crowned hat with a broad brim. The new-

comer was introduced to Mr. Pickwick as Mr. Pott, the editor of the Eatanswill Gazette. After a few preliminary remarks, Mr. Pott turned round to Mr. Pickwick, and said with solemnity —

"This contest excites great interest in the metropolis, sir?"

"I believe it does," said Mr. Pickwick.

"To which I have reason to know," said Pott, looking towards Mr. Perker for corroboration, — "to which I have reason to know my article of last Saturday in some degree contributed."

"Not the least doubt of that," said the little man.

"The press is a mighty engine, sir," said Pott.

Mr. Pickwick yielded his fullest assent to the proposition.

"But I trust, sir," said Pott, "that I have never abused the enormous power I wield. I trust, sir, that I have never pointed the noble instrument which is placed in my hands, against the sacred bosom of private life, or the tender breast of individual reputation; — I trust, sir, that I have devoted my energies to — to endeavors — humble they may be, humble I know they are — to instil those principles of — which are — "

Here the editor of the Eatanswill Gazette, appearing to ramble, Mr. Pickwick came to his relief, and said —

"Certainly."

"And what, sir" — said Pott — "what, sir, let me ask you as an impartial man, is the state of the public mind in London with reference to my contest with the Independent?"

"Greatly excited, no doubt," interposed Mr. Perker, with a look of slyness which was very likely accidental.

"The contest," said Pott, "shall be prolonged so long as I have health and strength, and that portion of talent with which I am gifted. From that contest, sir, although it may unsettle men's minds and excite their feelings, and render them incapable for the discharge of the every-day duties of ordinary life; from that contest sir, I will never shrink till I have set my heel upon the Eatanswill Independent. I wish the people of London, and the people of this country to know, sir, that they may rely upon me; — that I will not desert them, that I am resolved to stand by them, sir, to the last."

"Your conduct is most noble, sir," said Mr. Pickwick; and he grasped the hand of the magnanimous Pott.

"You are, sir, I perceive, a man of sense and talent," said Mr. Pott, almost breathless with the vehemence of his patriotic declaration. "I am most happy, sir, to make the acquaintance of such a man."

"And I," said Mr. Pickwick, "feel deeply honored by this expression of your opinion. Allow me, sir, to introduce to you my fellow-travellers, the other corresponding members of the club I am proud to have founded."

"I shall be delighted," said Mr. Pott.

Mr. Pickwick withdrew, and returning with his friends, presented them in due form to the editor of the Eatanswill Gazette.

"Now my dear Pott," said little Mr. Perker, "the question is, what are we to do with our friends here?"

"We can stop in this house, I suppose," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Not a spare bed in the house, my dear sir — not a single bed."

"Extremely awkward," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Very;" said his fellow-voyagers.

"I have an idea upon this subject," said Mr. Pott, "which I think may be very successfully adopted. They have two beds at the Peacock, and I can boldly say, on behalf of Mrs. Pott, that she will be delighted to accommodate Mr. Pickwick and any of his friends, if the other two gentlemen and their servant do not object to shifting, as they best can, at the Peacock."

After repeated pressings on the part of Mr. Pott, and repeated protestations on that of Mr. Pickwick that he could not think of incommoding or troubling his amiable wife, it was decided that this was the only feasible arrangement that could be made. So it *was* made; and after dining together at the Town Arms, the friends separated, Mr. Tupman and Mr. Snodgrass repairing to the Peacock, and Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Winkle proceeding to the mansion of Mr. Pott; it having been previously arranged that they should all reassemble at the Town Arms in the morning, and accompany the Honorable Samuel Slumkey's procession to the place of nomination.

Mr. Pott's domestic circle was limited to himself and his wife. All men whom mighty genius has raised to a proud eminence in the world, have usually some little weakness which appears the more conspicuous from the contrast it presents to their general character. If Mr. Pott had a weakness, it was, perhaps, that he was *rather* too submissive to the somewhat contemptuous control and sway of his wife. We do not feel justified in laying any particular stress upon the fact, because on the present occasion all Mrs. Pott's most winning ways were brought into requisition to receive the two gentlemen.

"My dear," said Mr. Pott, "Mr. Pickwick — Mr. Pickwick of London."

Mrs. Pott received Mr. Pickwick's paternal grasp of the hand with enchanting sweetness: and Mr. Winkle, who had not been announced at all, slided and bowed, unnoticed, in an obscure corner.

"P. my dear" — said Mrs. Pott.

"My life," said Mr. Pott.

"Pray introduce the other gentleman."

"I beg a thousand pardons," said Mr. Pott. "Permit me, Mrs. Pott, Mr." —

"Winkle," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Winkle," echoed Mr. Pott, and the ceremony of introduction was complete.

"We owe you many apologies, ma'am," said Mr. Pickwick, "for disturbing your domestic arrangements at so short a notice."

"I beg you won't mention it, sir," replied the feminine Pott, with vivacity. "It is a high treat to me, I assure you, to see any new faces; living as I do, from day to day, and week to week, in this dull place, and seeing nobody."

"Nobody, my dear!" exclaimed Mr. Pott, archly.

"Nobody but *you*," retorted Mrs. Pott, with asperity.

"You see, Mr. Pickwick," said the host in explanation of his wife's lament, "that we are in some measure cut off from many enjoyments and pleasures of which we might otherwise partake. My public station, as editor of the Eatanswill Gazette, the position which that paper holds in the country, my constant immersion in the vortex of politics" —

"P. my dear" — interposed Mrs. Pott.

"My life" — said the editor.

"I wish, my dear, you would endeavor to find some topic of conversation in which these gentlemen might take some rational interest."

"But my love," said Mr. Pott, with great humility, "Mr. Pickwick does take an interest in it."

"It's well for him if he can," said Mrs. Pott, emphatically; "I am wearied out of my life with your politics, and quarrels with the Independent, and nonsense. I am quite astonished P. at your making such an exhibition of your absurdity."

"But my dear" — said Mr. Pott.

"Oh, nonsense, don't talk to me;" said Mrs. Pott. "Do you play *ecarté*, sir?"

"I shall be very happy to learn, under your tuition," replied Mr. Winkle.

"Well, then, draw that little table into this window, and let me get out of hearing of those prosy politics."

"Jane," said Mr. Pott, to the servant who brought in candles, "go down into the office, and bring me up the file of the Gazette for Eighteen Hundred and Twenty Eight. I'll just read you" — added the editor, turning to Mr. Pickwick, "I'll just read you a few of the leaders I wrote at that time, upon the Buff job of appointing a new tollman to the turnpike here; I rather think they'll amuse you."

"I should like to hear them very much, indeed," said Mr. Pickwick.

Up came the file, and down sat the editor, with Mr. Pickwick at his side.

We have in vain pored over the leaves of Mr. Pickwick's note-book, in the hope of meeting with a general summary of these beautiful compositions. We have every reason to believe that he was perfectly enraptured

with the vigor and freshness of the style; indeed Mr. Winkle has recorded the fact that his eyes were closed, as if with excess of pleasure, during the whole time of their perusal.

The announcement of supper put a stop both to the game at *ecarté*, and the recapitulation of the beauties of the Eatanswill Gazette. Mrs. Pott was in the highest spirits and the most agreeable humor. Mr. Winkle had already made considerable progress in her good opinion, and she did not hesitate to inform him, confidentially, that Mr. Pickwick was "a delightful old dear." These terms convey a familiarity of expression, in which few of those who were intimately acquainted with that colossal-minded man, would have presumed to indulge. We have preserved them, nevertheless, as affording at once a touching and a convincing proof of the estimation in which he was held by every class of society, and the ease with which he made his way to their hearts and feelings.

It was a late hour of the night — long after Mr. Tupman and Mr. Snodgrass had fallen asleep in the inmost recesses of the Peacock — when the two friends retired to rest. Slumber soon fell upon the senses of Mr. Winkle, but his feelings had been excited, and his admiration roused; and for many hours after sleep had rendered him insensible to earthly objects, the face and figure of the agreeable Mrs. Pott presented themselves again and again to his wandering imagination.

The noise and bustle which ushered in the morning, were sufficient to dispel from the mind of the most romantic visionary in existence, any associations but those which were immediately connected with the rapidly approaching election. The beating of drums, the blow-

ing of horns and trumpets, the shouting of men, and tramping of horses, echoed and reëchoed through the streets from the earliest dawn of day; and an occasional fight between the light skirmishers of either party, at once enlivened the preparations, and agreeably diversified their character.

"Well Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, as his valet appeared at his bedroom door, just as he was concluding his toilet; "all alive to-day, I suppose?"

"Reg'lar game, sir," replied Mr. Weller; "our people's a col-lecting down at the Town Arms, and they're a hollering themselves hoarse already."

"Ah," said Mr. Pickwick, "do they seem devoted to their party, Sam?"

"Never see such dewotion in my life, sir."

"Energetic, eh?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Uncommon," replied Sam; "I never see men eat and drink so much afore. I wonder they a'n't afeer'd o' bu'stin'."

"That's the mistaken kindness of the gentry here," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Wery likely," replied Sam, briefly.

"Fine, fresh, hearty fellows they seem," said Mr. Pickwick, glancing from the window.

"Wery fresh," replied Sam; "me, and the two waiters at the Peacock, has been a pumpin' over the independent woters as supped there last night."

"Pumping over independent voters!" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick.

"Yes," said his attendant, "every man slept vere he fell down; we dragged 'em out, one by one, this mornin' and put 'em under the pump, and they're in reg'lar fine order, now. Shillin' a head the committee paid for that 'ere job."

"Can such things be!" exclaimed the astonished Mr. Pickwick.

"Lord bless your heart, sir," said Sam, "why where was you half baptized? — that's nothin', that a'n't."

"Nothing?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Nothin' at all, sir," replied his attendant. "The night afore the last day o' the last election here, the opposite party bribed the bar-maid at the Town Arms, to hocus the brandy and water of fourteen unpolled electors as was a stoppin' in the house."

"What do you mean by 'hocussing' brandy and water?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"Puttin' laud'num in it," replied Sam. "Blessed if she didn't send 'em all to sleep till twelve hours arter the election was over. They took one man up to the booth, in a truck, fast asleep, by way of experiment, but it was no go — they wouldn't poll him; so they brought him back, and put him to bed again."

"Strange practices, these," said Mr. Pickwick; half speaking to himself, and half addressing Sam.

"Not half so strange as a miraculous circumstance as happened to my own father, at an election-time, in this werry place, sir," replied Sam.

"What was that?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"Why he drove a coach down here once," said Sam, "'Lection time came on, and he was engaged by vun party to bring down woters from London. Night afore he was a going to drive up, committee on t'other side sends for him quietly, and away he goes vith the messenger, who shows him in; — large room — lots of gen'l'm'n — heaps of papers, pens and ink, and all that 'ere. 'Ah, Mr. Weller,' says the gen'l'm'n in the chair, 'glad to see you, sir; how are you?' — 'Wery well,

thank'ee sir,' says my father; 'I hope *you're* pretty middlin',' says he. — 'Pretty well, thank'ee, sir,' says the gen'l'm'n; 'sit down, Mr. Weller — pray sit down, sir.' So my father sits down, and he an' the gen'l'm'n looks wery hard at each other. 'You don't remember me?' says the gen'l'm'n. — 'Can't say I do, says my father. — 'Oh, I know you,' says the gen'l'm'n; 'know'd you wen you was a boy,' says he. — 'Well, I don't remember you,' says my father. — 'That's wery odd,' says the gen'l'm'n. — 'Wery,' says my father. — 'You must have a bad mem'ry Mr. Weller,' says the gen'l'm'n. — 'Well, it is a wery bad 'un,' says my father. — 'I thought so,' says the gen'l'm'n. So then they pours him out a glass of wine, and gammons him about his driving, and gets him into a reg'lar good humor, and at last shoves a twenty pound note in his hand. 'It's a wery bad road between this and London,' says the gen'l'm'n. — 'Here and there it *is* a heavy road,' says my father. — ''Specially near the canal, I think,' says the gen'l'm'n. — 'Nasty bit, that 'ere,' says my father. — 'Well, Mr. Weller,' says the gen'l'm'n, 'you're a wery good whip, and can do what you like with your horses, we know. We're all wery fond o' you, Mr. Weller, so in case you *should* have an accident when you're a-bringing these here woters down, and *should* tip 'em over into the canal without hurtin' of 'em, this is for yourself,' says he. — 'Gen'l'm'n, you're wery kind,' says my father, and 'I'll drink your health in another glass of wine,' says he; wich he did, and then buttons up the money, and bows himself out. You wouldn't believe, sir," continued Sam, with a look of inexpressible impudence at his master, "that on the wery day as he came down with them woters, his coach *was* upset on that 'ere wery spot, and ev'ry man on 'em was turned into the canal."

"And got out again?" inquired Mr. Pickwick, hastily.

"Why," replied Sam, very slowly, "I rather think one old gen'l'm'n was missin'; I know his hat was found, but I a'n't quite certain whether his head was in it or not. But what I look at, is the hex-traordinary, and wonderful coincidence, that arter what that gen'l'm'n said, my father's coach should be upset in that wery place, and on that wery day!"

"It is no doubt a very extraordinary circumstance indeed," said Mr. Pickwick. "But brush my hat, Sam, for I hear Mr. Winkle calling me to breakfast."

With these words Mr. Pickwick descended to the parlor, where he found breakfast laid, and the family already assembled. The meal was hastily despatched; each of the gentlemen's hats was decorated with an enormous blue favor, made up by the fair hands of Mrs. Pott herself; and as Mr. Winkle had undertaken to escort that lady to a house-top, in the immediate vicinity of the hustings, Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Pott repaired alone to the Town Arms, from the back window of which, one of Mr. Slumkey's committee was addressing six small boys, and one girl, whom he dignified, at every second sentence, with the imposing title of "men of Eatanswill," whereat the six small boys aforesaid cheered prodigiously.

The stable-yard exhibited unequivocal symptoms of the glory and strength of the Eatanswill Blues. There was a regular army of blue flags, some with one handle, and some with two, exhibiting appropriate devices, in golden characters four feet high, and stout in proportion. There was a grand band of trumpets, bassoons and drums, marshalled four abreast, and earning their money, if ever men did, especially the drum-beaters, who were very muscular. There were bodies of constables

with blue staves, twenty committee-men with blue scarfs, and a mob of voters with blue cockades. There were electors on horseback, and electors afoot. There was an open carriage and four, for the honorable Samuel Slumkey; and there were four carriages and pair, for his friends and supporters: and the flags were rustling, and the band was playing, and the constables were swearing, and the twenty committee-men were squabbling, and the mob were shouting, and the horses were backing, and the post-boys perspiring; and everybody, and everything, then and there assembled, was for the special use, behoof, honor, and renown, of the honorable Samuel Slumkey, of Slumkey Hall, one of the candidates for the representation of the Borough of Eatanswill, in the Commons House of Parliament of the United Kingdom.

Loud and long were the cheers, and mighty was the rustling of one of the blue flags, with "Liberty of the Press" inscribed thereon, when the sandy head of Mr. Pott was discerned in one of the windows, by the mob beneath; and tremendous was the enthusiasm when the honorable Samuel Slumkey himself, in top-boots, and a blue neckerchief, advanced and seized the hand of the said Pott, and melodramatically testified by gestures to the crowd, his ineffaceable obligations to the Eatanswill Gazette.

"Is everything ready?" said the honorable Samuel Slumkey to Mr. Perker.

"Everything, my dear sir," was the little man's reply.

"Nothing has been omitted, I hope?" said the honorable Samuel Slumkey.

"Nothing has been left undone, my dear sir — noth-

ing whatever. There are twenty washed men at the street-door for you to shake hands with; and six children in arms that you're to pat on the head, and inquire the age of; be particular about the children, my dear sir, — it has always a great effect, that sort of thing."

"I'll take care," said the honorable Samuel Slumkey.

"And, perhaps, my dear sir" — said the cautious little man, "perhaps if you *could* — I don't mean to say it's indispensable — but if you *could* manage to kiss one of 'em, it would produce a very great impression on the crowd."

"Wouldn't it have as good an effect if the proposer or seconder did that?" said the honorable Samuel Slumkey.

"Why, I am afraid it wouldn't," replied the agent; "if it were done by yourself, my dear sir, I think it would make you very popular."

"Very well," said the honorable Samuel Slumkey, with a resigned air, "then it must be done. That's all."

"Arrange the procession," cried the twenty committee-men.

Amidst the cheers of the assembled throng, the band, and the constables, and the committee-men, and the voters, and the horsemen, and the carriages, took their places — each of the two-horse vehicles being closely packed with as many gentlemen as could manage to stand upright in it; and that assigned to Mr. Perker, containing Mr. Pickwick, Mr. Tupman, Mr. Snodgrass, and about half a dozen of the committee beside.

There was a moment of awful suspense as the procession waited for the honorable Samuel Slumkey to step into his carriage. Suddenly the crowd set up a great cheering.

"He has come out," said little Mr. Perker, greatly excited; the more so as their position did not enable them to see what was going forward.

Another cheer, much louder.

"He has shaken hands with the men," cried the little agent.

Another cheer, far more vehement.

"He has patted the babies on the head," said Mr. Perker, trembling with anxiety.

A roar of applause that rent the air.

"He has kissed one of 'em!" exclaimed the delighted little man.

A second roar.

"He has kissed another," gasped the excited manager.

A third roar.

"He's kissing 'em all!" screamed the enthusiastic little gentleman. And, hailed by the deafening shouts of the multitude, the procession moved on.

How or by what means it became mixed up with the other procession, and how it was ever extricated from the confusion consequent thereupon, is more than we can undertake to describe, inasmuch as Mr. Pickwick's hat was knocked over his eyes, nose, and mouth, by one poke of a Buff flag-staff, very early in the proceedings. He describes himself as being surrounded on every side, when he could catch a glimpse of the scene, by angry and ferocious countenances, by a vast cloud of dust, and by a dense crowd of combatants. He represents himself as being forced from the carriage by some unseen power, and being personally engaged in a pugilistic encounter; but with whom, or how, or why, he is wholly unable to state. He then felt himself forced up some

wooden steps by the persons from behind: and on removing his hat, found himself surrounded by his friends, in the very front of the left-hand side of the hustings. The right was reserved for the Buff party, and the centre for the mayor and his officers; one of whom — the fat crier of Eatanswill — was ringing an enormous bell, by way of commanding silence, while Mr. Horatio Fizkin, and the honorable Samuel Slumkey, with their hands upon their hearts, were bowing with the utmost affability to the troubled sea of heads that inundated the open space in front; and from whence arose a storm of groans, and shouts, and yells, and hootings, that would have done honor to an earthquake.

"There's Winkle," said Mr. Tupman, pulling his friend by the sleeve.

"Where?" said Mr. Pickwick, putting on his spectacles, which he had fortunately kept in his pocket hitherto.

"There," said Mr. Tupman, "on the top of that house." And there, sure enough, in the leaden gutter of a tiled roof, were Mr. Winkle and Mrs. Pott, comfortably seated in a couple of chairs, waving their handkerchiefs in token of recognition — a compliment which Mr. Pickwick returned by kissing his hand to the lady.

The proceedings had not yet commenced; and as an inactive crowd is generally disposed to be jocose, this very innocent action was sufficient to awaken their facetiousness.

"Oh you wicked old rascal," cried one voice, "looking arter the girls, are you?"

"Oh you wenerable sinner," cried another.

"Putting on his spectacles to look at a married 'ooman!" said a third.

"I see him a winkin' at her, with his wicked old eye," shouted a fourth.

"Look arter your wife, Pott," bellowed a fifth; — and then there was a roar of laughter.

As these taunts were accompanied with invidious comparisons between Mr. Pickwick and an aged ram, and several witticisms of the like nature; and as they moreover rather tended to convey reflections upon the honor of an innocent lady, Mr. Pickwick's indignation was excessive; but as silence was proclaimed at the moment, he contented himself by scorching the mob with a look of pity for their misguided minds, at which they laughed more boisterously than ever.

"Silence!" roared the mayor's attendants.

"Whiffin, proclaim silence," said the mayor, with an air of pomp befitting his lofty station. In obedience to this command the crier performed another concerto on the bell, whereupon a gentleman in the crowd called out "muffins;" which occasioned another laugh.

"Gentlemen," said the mayor, at as loud a pitch as he could possibly force his voice to, — "Gentlemen. Brother electors of the Borough of Eatanswill. We are met here to-day, for the purpose of choosing a representative in the room of our late" —

Here the mayor was interrupted by a voice in the crowd.

"Suc-cess to the mayor!" cried the voice, "and may he never desert the nail and sarspan business, as he got his money by."

This allusion to the professional pursuits of the orator was received with a storm of delight, which, with a bell accompaniment, rendered the remainder of his speech inaudible, with the exception of the concluding sentence,

in which he thanked the meeting for the patient attention with which they had heard him throughout, — an expression of gratitude which elicited another burst of mirth, of about a quarter of an hour's duration.

Next, a tall thin gentleman, in a very stiff white neckerchief, after being repeatedly desired by the crowd to "send a boy home, to ask whether he hadn't left his voice under the pillow," begged to nominate a fit and proper person to represent them in Parliament. And when he said it was Horatio Fizkin, Esquire, of Fizkin Lodge, near Eatanswill, the Fizkinites applauded, and the Slumkeyites groaned, so long and so loudly, that both he and the seconder might have sung comic songs in lieu of speaking, without anybody's being a bit the wiser.

The friends of Horatio Fizkin, Esquire, having had their innings, a little choleric, pink-faced man stood forward to propose another fit and proper person to represent the electors of Eatanswill in Parliament; and very swimmingly the pink-faced gentleman would have got on, if he had not been rather too choleric to entertain a sufficient perception of the fun of the crowd. But after a very few sentences of figurative eloquence, the pink-faced gentleman got from denouncing those who interrupted him in the mob, to exchanging defiances with the gentlemen on the hustings; whereupon arose an uproar which reduced him to the necessity of expressing his feelings by serious pantomime, which he did, and then left the stage to his seconder, who delivered a written speech of half an hour's length, and wouldn't be stopped, because he had sent it all to the Eatanswill Gazette, and the Eatanswill Gazette had already printed it, every word.

Then Horatio Fizkin, Esquire, of Fizkin Lodge, near Eatanswill, presented himself for the purpose of addressing the electors; which he no sooner did, than the band employed by the honorable Samuel Slumkey, commenced performing with a power to which their strength in the morning was a trifle; in return for which, the Buff crowd belabored the heads and shoulders of the Blue crowd; on which the Blue crowd endeavored to dispossess themselves of their very unpleasant neighbors the Buff crowd; and a scene of struggling, and pushing, and fighting, succeeded, to which we can no more do justice than the mayor could, although he issued imperative orders to twelve constables to seize the ring-leaders, who might amount in number to two hundred and fifty, or thereabouts. At all these encounters, Horatio Fizkin, Esquire, of Fizkin Lodge, and his friends, waxed fierce and furious; until at last Horatio Fizkin, Esquire, of Fizkin Lodge, begged to ask his opponent the honorable Samuel Slumkey, of Slumkey Hall, whether that band played by his consent; which question the honorable Samuel Slumkey declining to answer, Horatio Fizkin, Esquire, of Fizkin Lodge, shook his fist in the countenance of the honorable Samuel Slumkey, of Slumkey Hall; upon which the honorable Samuel Slumkey, his blood being up, defied Horatio Fizkin, Esquire, to mortal combat. At this violation of all known rules and precedents of order, the mayor commanded another fantasia on the bell, and declared that he would bring before himself, both Horatio Fizkin, Esquire, of Fizkin Lodge, and the honorable Samuel Slumkey, of Slumkey Hall, and bind them over to keep the peace. Upon this terrific denunciation, the supporters of the two candidates interfered, and after the friends of

each party had quarrelled in pairs for three quarters of an hour, Horatio Fizkin, Esquire, touched his hat to the honorable Samuel Slumkey: the honorable Samuel Slumkey touched his to Horatio Fizkin, Esquire: the band was stopped: the crowd were partially quieted: and Horatio Fizkin, Esquire, was permitted to proceed.

The speeches of the two candidates, though differing in every other respect, afforded a beautiful tribute to the merit and high worth of the electors of Eatanswill. Both expressed their opinion that a more independent, a more enlightened, a more public-spirited, a more noble-minded, a more disinterested set of men than those who had promised to vote for him, never existed on earth; each darkly hinted his suspicions that the electors in the opposite interest had certain swinish and besotted infirmities which rendered them unfit for the exercise of the important duties they were called upon to discharge. Fizkin expressed his readiness to do anything he was wanted; Slumkey, his determination to do nothing that was asked of him. Both said that the trade, the manufactures, the commerce, the prosperity, of Eatanswill, would ever be dearer to their hearts than any earthly object; and each had it in his power to state, with the utmost confidence, that he was the man who would eventually be returned.

There was a show of hands; the mayor decided in favor of the honorable Samuel Slumkey, of Slumkey Hall, Horatio Fizkin, Esquire, of Fizkin Lodge, demanded a poll, and a poll was fixed accordingly. Then a vote of thanks was moved to the mayor for his able conduct in the chair; and the mayor devoutly wishing that he had had a chair to display his able conduct in (for he had been standing during the whole proceedings)

returned thanks. The processions reformed, the carriages rolled slowly through the crowd, and its members screeched and shouted after them as their feelings or caprice dictated.

During the whole time of the polling, the town was in a perpetual fever of excitement. Everything was conducted on the most liberal and delightful scale. Excisable articles were remarkably cheap at all the public-houses; and spring vans paraded the streets for the accommodation of voters who were seized with any temporary dizziness in the head — an epidemic which prevailed among the electors, during the contest, to a most alarming extent, and under the influence of which they might frequently be seen lying on the pavements in a state of utter insensibility. A small body of electors remained unpolled on the very last day. They were calculating and reflecting persons, who had not yet been convinced by the arguments of either party, although they had had frequent conferences with each. One hour before the close of the poll, Mr. Perker solicited the honor of a private interview with these intelligent, these noble, these patriotic men. It was granted. His arguments were brief, but satisfactory. They went in a body to the poll; and when they returned, the honorable Samuel Slumkey, of Slumkey Hall, was returned also.

CHAPTER XIV.

COMPRISING A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE COMPANY AT THE PEACOCK ASSEMBLED; AND A TALE TOLD BY A BAGMAN.

It is pleasant to turn from contemplating the strife and turmoil of political existence to the peaceful repose of private life. Although in reality no great partisan of either side, Mr. Pickwick was sufficiently fired with Mr. Pott's enthusiasm to apply his whole time and attention to the proceedings, of which the last chapter affords a description compiled from his own memoranda. Nor while he was thus occupied was Mr. Winkle idle, his whole time being devoted to pleasant walks and short country excursions with Mrs. Pott, who never failed, when such an opportunity presented itself, to seek some relief from the tedious monotony she so constantly complained of. The two gentlemen being thus completely domesticated in the Editor's house, Mr. Tupman and Mr. Snodgrass were in a great measure cast upon their own resources. Taking but little interest in public affairs, they beguiled their time chiefly with such amusements as the Peacock afforded, which were limited to a bagatelle-board in the first floor, and a sequestered skittle-ground in the back yard. In the science and nicety of both these recreations, which are far more abstruse than ordinary men suppose, they were

gradually initiated by Mr. Weller, who possessed a perfect knowledge of such pastimes. Thus, notwithstanding that they were in a great measure deprived of the comfort and advantage of Mr. Pickwick's society, they were still enabled to beguile the time, and to prevent its hanging heavily on their hands.

It was in the evening, however, that the Peacock presented attractions which enabled the two friends to resist even the invitations of the gifted, though prosy, Pott. It was in the evening that the "commercial room" was filled with a social circle, whose characters and manners it was the delight of Mr. Tupman to observe; whose sayings and doings it was the habit of Mr. Snodgrass to note down.

Most people know what sort of places commercial rooms usually are. That of the Peacock differed in no material respect from the generality of such apartments: that is to say, it was a large bare-looking room, the furniture of which had no doubt been better when it was newer, with a spacious table in the centre, and a variety of smaller dittos in the corners: an extensive assortment of variously shaped chairs, and an old Turkey carpet, bearing about the same relative proportion to the size of the room as a lady's pocket-handkerchief might to the floor of a watch-box. The walls were garnished with one or two large maps; and several weather-beaten rough great-coats, with complicated capes, dangled from a long row of pegs in one corner. The mantel-shelf was ornamented with a wooden inkstand, containing one stump of a pen and half a wafer: a road-book and directory: a county history, minus the cover: and the mortal remains of a trout in a glass coffin. The atmosphere was redolent of tobacco-smoke, the fumes of which had communicated a rather dingy hue to the whole

room, and more especially to the dusty red curtains which shaded the windows. On the sideboard, a variety of miscellaneous articles were huddled together, the most conspicuous of which were some very cloudy fish-sauce cruets, a couple of driving-boxes, two or three whips, and as many travelling shawls, a tray of knives and forks, and the mustard.

Here it was that Mr. Tupman and Mr. Snodgrass were seated on the evening after the conclusion of the election, with several other temporary inmates of the house, smoking and drinking.

"Well, gents," said a stout, hale personage of about forty, with only one eye — a very bright black eye, which twinkled with a roguish expression of fun and good-humor; "our noble selves, gents. I always propose that toast to the company, and drink Mary to myself. Eh, Mary!"

"Get along with you, you wretch," said the handmaiden, obviously not ill-pleased with the compliment, however.

"Don't go away, Mary," said the black-eyed man.

"Let me alone, imperence," said the young lady.

"Never mind," said the one-eyed man, calling after the girl as she left the room; "I'll step out by and by, Mary. Keep your spirits up, dear." Here he went through the not very difficult process of winking upon the company with his solitary eye, to the enthusiastic delight of an elderly personage with a dirty face and a clay pipe.

"Rum creeters is women," said the dirty-faced man, after a pause.

"Ah, no mistake about that," said a very red-faced man, behind a cigar.

After this little bit of philosophy, there was another pause.

"There's rummer things than women in this world though, mind you," said the man with the black eye, slowly filling a large Dutch pipe, with a most capacious bowl.

"Are you married?" inquired the dirty-faced man.

"Can't say I am."

"I thought not." Here the dirty-faced man fell into ecstasies of mirth at his own retort, in which he was joined by a man of bland voice and placid countenance, who always made it a point to agree with everybody.

"Women, after all, gentlemen," said the enthusiastic Mr. Snodgrass, "are the great props and comforts of our existence."

"So they are," said the placid gentleman.

"When they're in a good-humor," interposed the dirty-faced man.

"And that's very true," said the placid one.

"I repudiate that qualification," said Mr. Snodgrass, whose thoughts were fast reverting to Emily Wardle. "I repudiate it with disdain — with indignation. Show me the man who says anything against women, as women, and I boldly declare he is not a man." And Mr. Snodgrass took his cigar from his mouth, and struck the table violently with his clenched fist.

"That's good sound argument," said the placid man.

"Containing a position which I deny," interrupted he of the dirty countenance.

"And there's certainly a very great deal of truth in what you observe, too, sir," said the placid gentleman.

"Your health, sir," said the bagman with the lonely eye, bestowing an approving nod on Mr. Snodgrass.

Mr. Snodgrass acknowledged the compliment.

"I always like to hear a good argument," continued the bagman, "a sharp one like this; it's very improving: but this little argument about women brought to my mind a story I have heard an old uncle of mine tell, the recollection of which, just now, made me say there were rummer things than women to be met with sometimes."

"I should like to hear that same story," said the red-faced man with the cigar.

"Should you?" was the only reply of the bagman, who continued to smoke with great vehemence.

"So should I," said Mr. Tupman, speaking for the first time. He was always anxious to increase his stock of experience.

"Should *you?* Well, then, I'll tell it. No, I won't. I know you won't believe it," said the man with the roguish eye, making that organ look more roguish than ever.

"If you say it's true, of course I shall," said Mr. Tupman.

"Well, upon that understanding, I'll tell it," replied the traveller. "Did you ever hear of the great commercial house of Bilson and Slum? But it doesn't matter though, whether you did or not, because they retired from business long since. It's eighty years ago since the circumstance happened to a traveller for that house, but he was a particular friend of my uncle's; and my uncle told the story to me. It's a queer name; but he used to call it

THE BAGMAN'S STORY.

and he used to tell it, something in this way.

"One winter's evening, about five o'clock, just as it began to grow dusk, a man in a gig might have been seen urging his tired horse along the road which leads across Marlborough Downs, in the direction of Bristol. I say he might have been seen, and I have no doubt he would have been, if anybody but a blind man had happened to pass that way; but the weather was so bad, and the night so cold and wet, that nothing was out but the water, and so the traveller jogged along in the middle of the road, lonesome and dreary enough. If any bagman of that day could have caught sight of the little neck-or-nothing sort of gig, with a clay-colored body and red wheels, and the vixenish ill-tempered, fast-going bay mare, that looked like a cross between a butcher's horse and a twopenny post-office pony, he would have known at once, that this traveller could have been no other than Tom Smart, of the great house of Bilson and Slum, Cateaton Street, City. However, as there was no bagman to look on, nobody knew anything at all about the matter; and so Tom Smart and his clay-colored gig with the red wheels, and the vixenish mare with the fast pace, went on together, keeping the secret among them: and nobody was a bit the wiser.

"There are many pleasanter places even in this dreary world, than Marlborough Downs when it blows hard; and if you throw in beside, a gloomy winter's evening, a miry and sloppy road, and a pelting fall of heavy rain, and try the effect, by way of experiment, in your own proper person, you will experience the full force of this observation.

"The wind blew — not up the road or down it, though that's bad enough, but sheer across it, sending the rain slanting down like the lines they used to rule in the

copy-books at school, to make the boys slope well. For a moment it would die away, and the traveller would begin to delude himself into the belief that, exhausted with its previous fury, it had quietly laid itself down to rest, when whoo! he would hear it growling and whistling in the distance, and on it would come rushing over the hill-tops, and sweeping along the plain, gathering sound and strength as it drew nearer, until it dashed with a heavy gust against horse and man, driving the sharp rain into their ears, and its cold damp breath into their very bones; and past them it would scour, far, far away, with a stunning roar, as if in ridicule of their weakness, and triumphant in the consciousness of its own strength and power.

"The bay mare splashed away, through the mud and water, with drooping ears: now and then tossing her head as if to express her disgust at this very ungentlemanly behavior of the elements, but keeping a good pace notwithstanding, until a gust of wind, more furious than any that had yet assailed them, caused her to stop suddenly, and plant her four feet firmly against the ground, to prevent her being blown over. It's a special mercy that she did this, for if she *had* been blown over, the vixenish mare was so light, and the gig was so light, and Tom Smart such a light weight into the bargain, that they must infallibly have all gone rolling over and over together, until they reached the confines of earth, or until the wind fell; and in either case the probability is, that neither the vixenish mare, nor the clay-colored gig with the red wheels, nor Tom Smart, would ever have been fit for service again.

"'Well, damn my straps and whiskers,' says Tom Smart, (Tom sometimes had an unpleasant knack of

swearing), 'Damn my straps and whiskers,' says Tom, 'if this a'n't pleasant, blow me!'

"You'll very likely ask me, why, as Tom Smart had been pretty well blown already, he expressed this wish to be submitted to the same process again. I can't say — all I know is, that Tom Smart said so — or at least he always told my uncle he said so, and it's just the same thing.

"'Blow me,' says Tom Smart; and the mare neighed as if she were precisely of the same opinion.

"'Cheer up, old girl,' said Tom, patting the bay mare on the neck with the end of his whip. 'It won't do pushing on, such a night as this; the first house we come to we'll put up at, so the faster you go the sooner it's over. Soho, old girl — gently — gently.'

"Whether the vixenish mare was sufficiently well acquainted with the tones of Tom's voice to comprehend his meaning, or whether she found it colder standing still than moving on, of course I can't say. But I can say that Tom had no sooner finished speaking, than she pricked up her ears, and started forward at a speed which made the clay-colored gig rattle till you would have supposed every one of the red spokes was going to fly out on the turf of Marlborough Downs; and even Tom, whip as he was, couldn't stop or check her pace, until she drew up, of her own accord, before a road-side inn on the right-hand side of the way, about half a quarter of a mile from the end of the Downs.

"Tom cast a hasty glance at the upper part of the house as he threw the reins to the hostler, and stuck the whip in the box. It was a strange old place, built of a kind of shingle, inlaid, as it were, with cross-beams, with gable-topped windows projecting completely over

the pathway, and a low door with a dark porch, and a couple of steep steps leading down into the house, instead of the modern fashion of half a dozen shallow ones, leading up to it. It was a comfortable-looking place though, for there was a strong cheerful light in the bar-window, which shed a bright ray across the road, and even lighted up the hedge on the other side; and there was a red flickering light in the opposite window, one moment but faintly discernible, and the next gleaming strongly through the drawn curtains, which intimated that a rousing fire was blazing within. Marking these little evidences with the eye of an experienced traveller, Tom dismounted with as much agility as his half-frozen limbs would permit, and entered the house.

"In less than five minutes' time, Tom was ensconced in the room opposite the bar — the very room where he had imagined the fire blazing — before a substantial matter-of-fact roaring fire, composed of something short of a bushel of coals, and wood enough to make half a dozen decent gooseberry-bushes, piled half way up the chimney, and roaring and crackling with a sound that of itself would have warmed the heart of any reasonable man. This was comfortable, but this was not all, for a smartly dressed girl, with a bright eye and a neat ankle, was laying a very clean white cloth on the table; and as Tom sat with his slippered feet on the fender. and his back to the open door, he saw a charming prospect of the bar reflected in the glass over the chimney-piece, with delightful rows of green bottles and gold labels, together with jars of pickles and preserves, and cheeses and boiled hams, and rounds of beef, arranged on shelves in the most tempting and delicious array. Well, this was comfortable too; but even this was not

all — for in the bar, seated at tea at the nicest possible little table, drawn close up before the brightest possible little fire, was a buxom widow of somewhere about eight and forty or thereabouts, with a face as comfortable as the bar, who was evidently the landlady of the house, and the supreme ruler over all these agreeable possessions. There was only one drawback to the beauty of the whole picture, and that was a tall man — a very tall man — in a brown coat and bright basket buttons, and black whiskers, and wavy black hair, who was seated at tea with the widow, and who it required no great penetration to discover was in a fair way of persuading her to be a widow no longer, but to confer upon him the privilege of sitting down in that bar, for and during the whole remainder of the term of his natural life.

"Tom Smart was by no means of an irritable or envious disposition, but somehow or other the tall man with the brown coat and the bright basket buttons did rouse what little gall he had in his composition, and did make him feel extremely indignant: the more especially as he could now and then observe, from his seat before the glass, certain little affectionate familiarities passing between the tall man and the widow, which sufficiently denoted that the tall man was as high in favor as he was in size. Tom was fond of hot punch — I may venture to say he was *very* fond of hot punch — and after he had seen the vixenish mare well fed and well littered down, and had eaten every bit of the nice little hot dinner which the widow tossed up for him with her own hands, he just ordered a tumbler of it, by way of experiment. Now, if there was one thing in the whole range of domestic art, which the widow could manufacture better than another, it was this identical article; and the first

tumbler was adapted to Tom Smart's taste with such peculiar nicety, that he ordered a second with the least possible delay. Hot punch is a pleasant thing, gentlemen — an extremely pleasant thing under any circumstances — but in that snug old parlor, before the roaring fire, with the wind blowing outside till every timber in the old house creaked again, Tom Smart found it perfectly delightful. He ordered another tumbler, and then another — I am not quite certain whether he didn't order another after that — but the more he drank of the hot punch, the more he thought of the tall man.

"'Confound his impudence!' said Tom to himself, 'what business has he in that snug bar? Such an ugly villain too!' said Tom. 'If the widow had any taste, she might surely pick up some better fellow than that.' Here Tom's eye wandered from the glass on the chimney-piece, to the glass on the table; and as he felt himself becoming gradually sentimental, he emptied the fourth tumbler of punch and ordered a fifth.

"Tom Smart, gentlemen, had always been very much attached to the public line. It had long been his ambition to stand in a bar of his own, in a green coat, knee-cords, and tops. He had a great notion of taking the chair at convivial dinners, and he had often thought how well he could preside in a room of his own in the talking way, and what a capital example he could set to his customers in the drinking department. All these things passed rapidly through Tom's mind as he sat drinking the hot punch by the roaring fire, and he felt very justly and properly indignant that the tall man should be in a fair way of keeping such an excellent house, while he, Tom Smart, was as far off from it as ever. So, after deliberating over the two last tumblers, whether he

hadn't a perfect right to pick a quarrel with the tall man for having contrived to get into the good graces of the buxom widow, Tom Smart at last arrived at the satisfactory conclusion that he was a very ill-used and persecuted individual, and had better go to bed.

"Up a wide and ancient staircase the smart girl preceded Tom, shading the chamber candle with her hand, to protect it from the currents of air which in such a rambling old place might have found plenty of room to disport themselves in, without blowing the candle out, but which did blow it out nevertheless; thus affording Tom's enemies an opportunity of asserting that it was he, and not the wind, who extinguished the candle, and that while he pretended to be blowing it a-light again, he was in fact kissing the girl. Be this as it may, another light was obtained, and Tom was conducted through a maze of rooms, and a labyrinth of passages, to the apartment which had been prepared for his reception, where the girl bade him good-night, and left him alone.

"It was a good large room with big closets, and a bed which might have served for a whole boarding-school, to say nothing of a couple of oaken presses that would have held the baggage of a small army; but what struck Tom's fancy most, was a strange, grim-looking, high-backed chair, carved in the most fantastic manner, with a flowered damask cushion, and the round knobs at the bottom of the legs carefully tied up in red cloth, as if it had got the gout in its toes. Of any other queer chair, Tom would only have thought it *was* a queer chair, and there would have been an end of the matter; but there was something about this particular chair, and yet he couldn't tell what it was, so odd and so unlike any other

piece of furniture he had ever seen, that it seemed to fascinate him. He sat down before the fire, and stared at the old chair for half an hour; — Deuse take the chair, it was such a strange old thing, he couldn't take his eyes off it.

"'Well,' said Tom, slowly undressing himself, and staring at the old chair all the while, which stood with a mysterious aspect by the bedside, 'I never saw such a rum concern as that in my days. Very odd,' said Tom, who had got rather sage with the hot punch, 'Very odd.' Tom shook his head with an air of profound wisdom, and looked at the chair again. He couldn't make anything of it though; so he got into bed, covered himself up warm, and fell asleep.

"In about half an hour, Tom woke up, with a start, from a confused dream of tall men and tumblers of punch: and the first object that presented itself to his waking imagination was the queer chair.

"'I won't look at it any more,' said Tom to himself, and he squeezed his eyelids together, and tried to persuade himself he was going to sleep again. No use; nothing but queer chairs danced before his eyes, kicking up their legs, jumping over each other's backs, and playing all kinds of antics.

"'I may as well see one real chair, as two or three complete sets of false ones,' said Tom, bringing out his head from under the bed-clothes. There it was, plainly discernible by the light of the fire, looking as provoking as ever.

"Tom gazed at the chair; and, suddenly as he looked at it, a most extraordinary change seemed to come over it. The carving of the back gradually assumed the lineaments and expression of an old, shrivelled human face;

the damask cushion became an antique, flapped waistcoat; the round knobs grew into a couple of feet, incased in red-cloth slippers; and the whole chair looked like a very ugly old man, of the previous century, with his arms a-kimbo. Tom sat up in bed, and rubbed his eyes to dispel the illusion. No. The chair was an ugly old gentleman; and what was more, he was winking at Tom Smart.

"Tom was naturally a headlong careless sort of dog, and he had had five tumblers of hot punch into the bargain; so, although he was a little startled at first, he began to grow rather indignant when he saw the old gentleman winking and leering at him with such an impudent air. At length he resolved that he wouldn't stand it; and as the old face still kept winking away as fast as ever, Tom said, in a very angry tone —

"'What the devil are you winking at me for?'

"'Because I like it, Tom Smart,' said the chair; or the old gentleman, whichever you like to call him. He stopped winking though, when Tom spoke, and began grinning like a superannuated monkey.

"'How do you know my name, old nut-cracker face!' inquired Tom Smart, rather staggered; — though he pretended to carry it off so well.

"'Come, come, Tom,' said the old gentleman, 'that's not the way to address solid Spanish Mahogany. Dam'me, you couldn't treat me with less respect if I was veneered.' When the old gentleman said this, he looked so fierce that Tom began to grow frightened.

"'I didn't mean to treat you with any disrespect, sir,' said Tom, in a much humbler tone than he had spoken in at first.

"'Well, well,' said the old fellow, 'perhaps not — perhaps not. Tom'—

"'Sir'—

"'I know everything about you, Tom; everything. You're very poor, Tom.'

"'I certainly am,' said Tom Smart. 'But how came you to know that?'

"'Never mind that,' said the old gentleman; 'you're much too fond of punch, Tom.'

"Tom Smart was just on the point of protesting that he hadn't tasted a drop since his last birthday, but when his eye encountered that of the old gentleman, he looked so knowing that Tom blushed, and was silent.

"'Tom,' said the old gentleman, 'the widow's a fine woman — remarkably fine woman — eh, Tom?' Here the old fellow screwed up his eyes, cocked up one of his wasted little legs, and looked altogether so unpleasantly amorous, that Tom was quite disgusted with the levity of his behavior; — at his time of life, too!

"'I am her guardian, Tom,' said the old gentleman.

"'Are you?' inquired Tom Smart.

"'I knew her mother, Tom,' said the old fellow; 'and her grandmother. She was very fond of me — made me this waistcoat, Tom.'

"'Did she?' said Tom Smart.

"'And these shoes,' said the old fellow, lifting up one of the red-cloth mufflers; 'but don't mention it, Tom, I shouldn't like to have it known that she was so much attached to me. It might occasion some unpleasantness in the family.' When the old rascal said this, he looked so extremely impertinent, that, as Tom Smart afterwards declared, he could have sat upon him without remorse.

"'I have been a great favorite among the women in my time, Tom,' said the profligate old debauchee; 'hundreds of fine women have sat in my lap for hours to-

gether. What do you think of that, you dog, eh?' The old gentleman was proceeding to recount some other exploits of his youth, when he was seized with such a violent fit of creaking that he was unable to proceed.

"'Just serves you right, old boy,' thought Tom Smart; but he didn't say anything.

"'Ah!' said the old fellow, 'I am a good deal troubled with this now. I am getting old, Tom, and have lost nearly all my rails. I have had an operation performed, too, — a small piece let into my back — and I found it a severe trial, Tom.'

"'I dare say you did, sir,' said Tom Smart.

"'However,' said the old gentleman, 'that's not the point. Tom! I want you to marry the widow.'

"'Me, sir!' said Tom.

"'You;' said the old gentleman.

"'Bless your reverend locks,' said Tom — (he had a few scattered horse-hairs left)—'bless your reverend locks, she wouldn't have me.' And Tom sighed involuntarily, as he thought of the bar.

"'Wouldn't she?' said the old gentleman, firmly.

"'No, no,' said Tom; 'there's somebody else in the wind. A tall man — a confoundedly tall man — with black whiskers.'

"'Tom,' said the old gentleman; 'she will never have him.'

"'Won't she?' said Tom. 'If you stood in the bar, old gentleman, you'd tell another story.'

"'Pooh, pooh,' said the old gentleman. 'I know all about that.'

"'About what?' said Tom.

"'The kissing behind the door, and all that sort of thing, Tom,' said the old gentleman. And here he gave

another impudent look, which made Tom very wroth, because as you all know, gentlemen, to hear an old fellow, who ought to know better, talking about these things, is very unpleasant — nothing more so.

"'I know all about that, Tom,' said the old gentleman 'I have seen it done very often in my time, Tom, between more people than I should like to mention to you, but it never came to anything after all.'

"'You must have seen some queer things,' said Tom, with an inquisitive look.

"'You may say that, Tom,' replied the old fellow, with a very complicated wink. 'I am the last of my family, Tom,' said the old gentleman, with a melancholy sigh.

"'Was it a large one?' inquired Tom Smart.

"'There were twelve of us, Tom,' said the old gentleman; 'fine straight-backed, handsome fellows as you'd wish to see. None of your modern abortions — all with arms, and with a degree of polish, though I say it that should not, which would have done your heart good to behold.'

"'And what's become of the others, sir?' asked Tom Smart.

"The old gentleman applied his elbow to his eye as he replied, 'Gone, Tom, gone. We had hard service, Tom, and they hadn't all my constitution. They got rheumatic about the legs and arms, and went into kitchens and other hospitals; and one of 'em, with long service and hard usage, positively lost his senses: — he got so crazy that he was obliged to be burnt. Shocking thing that, Tom.'

"'Dreadful!' said Tom Smart.

"The old fellow paused for a few minutes, apparently struggling with his feelings of emotion, and then said,

"'However, Tom, I am wandering from the point. This tall man, Tom, is a rascally adventurer. The moment he married the widow, he would sell off all the furniture, and run away. What would be the consequence? She would be deserted and reduced to ruin, and I should catch my death of cold in some broker's shop.'

"'Yes, but'—

"'Don't interrupt me,' said the old gentleman. 'Of you, Tom, I entertain a very different opinion; for I well know that if you once settled yourself in a public house, you would never leave it, as long as there was anything to drink within its walls.'

"'I am very much obliged to you for your good opinion, sir,' said Tom Smart.

"'Therefore,' resumed the old gentleman, in a dictatorial tone, 'you shall have her, and he shall not.'

"'What is to prevent it?' said Tom Smart, eagerly.

"'This disclosure,' replied the old gentleman; 'he is already married.'

"'How can I prove it?' said Tom, starting half out of bed.

"The old gentleman untucked his arm from his side, and having pointed to one of the oaken presses, immediately replaced it, in its old position.

"'He little thinks,' said the old gentleman, 'that in the right-hand pocket of a pair of trousers in that press, he has left a letter, entreating him to return to his disconsolate wife, with six — mark me, Tom — six babes, and all of them small ones.'

"As the old gentleman solemnly uttered these words, his features grew less and less distinct, and his figure more shadowy. A film came over Tom Smart's eyes. The old man seemed gradually blending into the chair,

the damask waistcoat to resolve into a cushion, the red slippers to shrink into little red cloth bags. The light faded gently away, and Tom Smart fell back on his pillow, and dropped asleep.

"Morning aroused Tom from the lethargic slumber, into which he had fallen on the disappearance of the old man. He sat up in bed, and for some minutes vainly endeavored to recall the events of the preceding night. Suddenly they rushed upon him. He looked at the chair; it was a fantastic and grim-looking piece of furniture, certainly, but it must have been a remarkably ingenious and lively imagination, that could have discovered any resemblance between it and an old man.

"'How are you, old boy?' said Tom. He was bolder in the daylight — most men are.

"The chair remained motionless, and spoke not a word.

"'Miserable morning,' said Tom. No. The chair would not be drawn into conversation.

"'Which press did you point to? — you can tell me that,' said Tom. Devil a word, gentlemen, the chair would say.

"'It's not much trouble to open it, anyhow,' said Tom, getting out of bed very deliberately. He walked up to one of the presses. The key was in the lock; he turned it, and opened the door. There *was* a pair of trousers there. He put his hand into the pocket, and drew forth the identical letter the old gentleman had described!

"'Queer sort of thing, this,' said Tom Smart; looking first at the chair and then at the press, and then at the letter and then at the chair again. 'Very queer,' said Tom. But, as there was nothing in either, to lessen the queerness, he thought he might as well dress himself,

and settle the tall man's business at once — just to put him out of his misery.

"Tom surveyed the rooms he passed through, on his way down stairs, with the scrutinizing eye of a landlord; thinking it not impossible, that before long, they and their contents would be his property. The tall man was standing in the snug little bar, with his hands behind him, quite at home. He grinned vacantly at Tom. A casual observer might have supposed he did it only to show his white teeth; but Tom Smart thought that a consciousness of triumph was passing through the place where the tall man's mind would have been, if he had had any. Tom laughed in his face; and summoned the landlady.

"'Good-morning, ma'am,' said Tom Smart, closing the door of the little parlor as the widow entered.

"'Good-morning, sir,' said the widow. 'What will you take for breakfast, sir?'

"Tom was thinking how he should open the case, so he made no answer.

"'There's a very nice ham,' said the widow, 'and a beautiful cold larded fowl. Shall I send 'em in, sir?'

"These words roused Tom from his reflections. His admiration of the widow increased as she spoke. Thoughtful creature! Comfortable provider!

"'Who is that gentleman in the bar, ma'am?' inquired Tom.

"'His name is Jenkins, sir,' said the widow, slightly blushing.

"'He's a tall man,' said Tom.

"'He is a very fine man, sir,' replied the widow, 'and a very nice gentleman.'

"'Ah!' said Tom.

"'Is there anything more you want, sir?' inquired the widow, rather puzzled by Tom's manner.

"'Why, yes,' said Tom. 'My dear ma'am, will you have the kindness to sit down for one moment?'

"The widow looked much amazed, but she sat down, and Tom sat down too, close beside her. I don't know how it happened, gentlemen — indeed my uncle used to tell me that Tom Smart said *he* didn't know how it happened either — but somehow or other the palm of Tom's hand fell upon the back of the widow's hand, and remained there while he spoke.

"'My dear ma'am,' said Tom Smart — he had always a great notion of committing the amiable — 'My dear ma'am, you deserve a very excellent husband, — you do indeed.'

"'Lor', sir!' said the widow — as well she might: Tom's mode of commencing the conversation being rather unusual, not to say startling: the fact of his never having set eyes upon her before the previous night, being taken into consideration. 'Lor', sir!'

"'I scorn to flatter, my dear ma'am,' said Tom Smart. 'You deserve a very admirable husband, and whoever he is, he'll be a very lucky man.' As Tom said this, his eye involuntarily wandered from the widow's face to the comforts around him.

"The widow looked more puzzled than ever, and made an effort to rise. Tom gently pressed her hand, as if to detain her, and she kept her seat. Widows, gentlemen, are not usually timorous, as my uncle used to say.

"'I am sure I am very much obliged to you, sir, for your good opinion,' said the buxom landlady, half laughing; 'and if ever I marry again' —

"'*If*,' said Tom Smart, looking very shrewdly out at the right-hand corner of his left eye. '*If*' —

"'Well,' said the widow, laughing outright this time, '*when* I do, I hope I shall have as good a husband as you describe.'

"'Jenkins, to wit,' said Tom.

"'Lor', sir!' exclaimed the widow.

"'Oh, don't tell me,' said Tom, 'I know him.'

"'I am sure nobody who knows him knows anything bad of him,' said the widow, bridling up at the mysterious air with which Tom had spoken.

"'Hem!' said Tom Smart.

"The widow began to think it was high time to cry, so she took out her handkerchief, and inquired whether Tom wished to insult her: whether he thought it like a gentleman to take away the character of another gentleman behind his back: why, if he had got anything to say, he didn't say it to the man, like a man, instead of terrifying a poor weak woman in that way, and so forth.

"'I'll say it to him fast enough,' said Tom, 'only I want you to hear it first.'

"'What is it?' inquired the widow, looking intently in Tom's countenance.

"'I'll astonish you,' said Tom, putting his hand in his pocket.

"'If it is that he wants money,' said the widow, 'I know that already, and you needn't trouble yourself.'

"'Pooh, nonsense, that's nothing,' said Tom Smart; '*I* want money. 'Ta'n't that.'

"'Oh dear, what can it be?' exclaimed the poor widow.

"'Don't be frightened,' said Tom Smart. He slowly

drew forth the letter, and unfolded it. 'You won't scream?' said Tom, doubtfully.

"'No, no,' replied the widow; 'let me see it.'

"'You won't go fainting away, or any of that nonsense?' said Tom.

"'No, no,' returned the widow, hastily.

"'And don't run out, and blow him up,' said Tom, 'because I'll do all that for you; you had better not exert yourself.'

"'Well, well,' said the widow, 'let me see it.'

"'I will,' replied Tom Smart; and, with these words, he placed the letter in the widow's hand.

"Gentlemen, I have heard my uncle say, that Tom Smart said, the widow's lamentations when she heard the disclosure would have pierced a heart of stone. Tom was certainly very tender-hearted, but they pierced his to the very core. The widow rocked herself to and fro, and wrung her hands.

"'Oh, the deception and villany of man!' said the widow.

"'Frightful, my dear ma'am; but compose yourself,' said Tom Smart.

"'Oh, I can't compose myself,' shrieked the widow. 'I shall never find any one else I can love so much!'

"'Oh yes you will, my dear soul,' said Tom Smart, letting fall a shower of the largest sized tears, in pity for the widow's misfortunes. Tom Smart, in the energy of his compassion, had put his arm round the widow's waist; and the widow, in a passion of grief, had clasped Tom's hand. She looked up in Tom's face, and smiled through her tears. Tom looked down in her's, and smiled through his.

"I never could find out, gentlemen, whether Tom did or did not kiss the widow at that particular moment.

He used to tell my uncle he didn't, but I have my doubts about it. Between ourselves, gentlemen, I rather think he did.

"At all events, Tom kicked the very tall man out at the front door half an hour after, and married the widow a month after. And he used to drive about the country, with the clay-colored gig with the red wheels, and the vixenish mare with the fast pace, till he gave up business many years afterwards, and went to France with his wife; and then the old house was pulled down."

"Will you allow me to ask you," said the inquisitive old gentleman, "what became of the chair?"

"Why," replied the one-eyed bagman, "it was observed to creak very much on the day of the wedding; but Tom Smart couldn't say for certain, whether it was with pleasure or bodily infirmity. He rather thought it was the latter, though, for it never spoke afterwards."

"Everybody believed the story, didn't they?" said the dirty-faced man, refilling his pipe.

"Except Tom's enemies," replied the bagman. "Some of 'em said Tom invented it altogether; and others said he was drunk, and fancied it, and got hold of the wrong trousers by mistake before he went to bed. But nobody ever minded what *they* said."

"Tom said it was all true?"

"Every word."

"And your uncle?"

"Every letter."

"They must have been nice men, both of 'em;" said the dirty-faced man.

"Yes, they were," replied the bagman; "very nice men indeed!"

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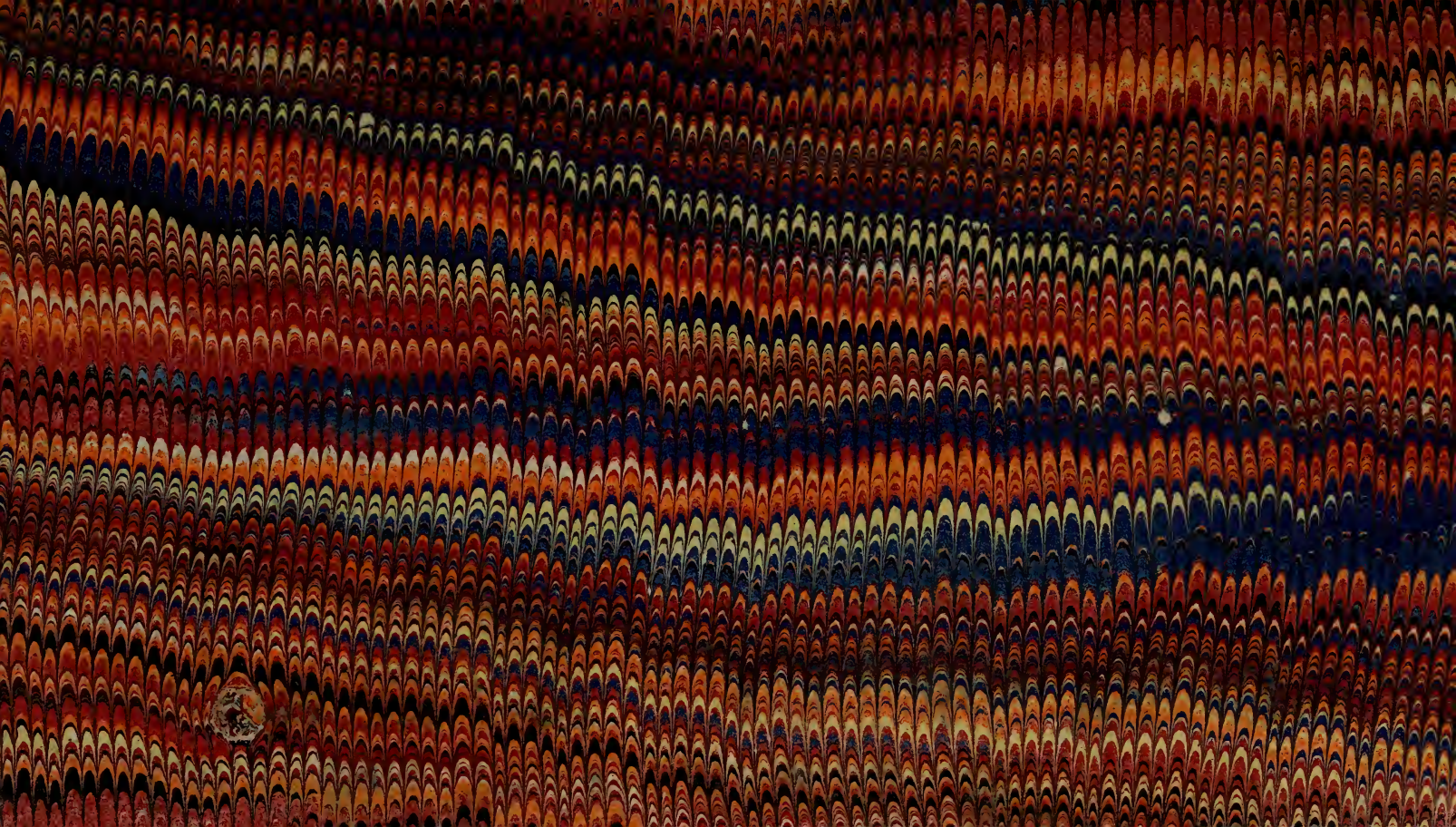

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